JUNE 1951

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Indonesia Sips the Wine of Independence — PETER SCHMID
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Israel's Opinion Polls and What They Find — RUTH LUDWIG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

William Barrett — Alfred Jospe — Norbert Muhlen
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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

"Containment": The Road to Peace *Robert Langbaum*

In the current controversy over policy in the Far East, it has been charged—especially by the supporters of General MacArthur—that "we have no program" with which to fight Communism. Mr. Langbaum argues that implicit in the policy of "containment" there is such a program—and that it is, in the true sense of the word, a progressive one.

The Jewish Student, Then and Now *Morris Freedman*

The students at New York's City College may be said in some sense to typify the Jewish student in America, insofar as such a distinctive type exists at all. In the changing atmosphere among City College students over the past twenty years, Mr. Freedman sees reflected the complicated course of Jewish integration into American life.

The "Efficient" Totalitarians *Max Beloff*

In the crises of recent years, voices have been raised again and again to contrast the "weakness" of democracy with the "decisiveness" and "efficiency" of totalitarianism. Mr. Beloff seeks to determine how much truth there is in this popular antithesis.

Science and Myth in the Nursery *Isa Kapp*

There has been, in the past decade or two, a torrent of literature—ranging from Professor Gesell's studies of the child's development to the helpful magazines given away in super-markets—that would prepare the modern mother to face the facts of infant life. What is the effect of such child-rearing advice upon the mother? Upon the child?

Trouble in Persia *G. F. Hudson*

Recent events in oil-rich Persia have not provided the West with any grounds for complacency. We seem to be on the verge of losing a vital source of military and economic potential, to say nothing of the possibility of the Communists taking over a strategically critical area. Mr. Hudson analyzes the reasons for this threatening debacle and suggests how England and America can act to overcome it.

The Sacred Year *Ernst Simon*

An examination of the cycle of Jewish holidays and of the religious meaning that each has come to express. Professor Simon finds that every festival has its unique way of "redeeming the time."

The Peddler with Light Bulbs *Bernard Malamud*

An encounter in the city. Another unusual short story by the author of "The Bill" in our April issue.

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COMMENTARY

THE FACTS ABOUT "CAPITALIST INEQUALITY"

Are the Rich Getting Richer and the Poor, Poorer?

WILLIAM D. GRAMPP

Each one for himself and God for us all, as the elephant said when it danced among the chickens.

IT IS often said that economic inequality is one of the besetting problems of capitalism. In large and influential areas of political opinion there is a clear dissatisfaction over what is presumed to be the distribution of income and of wealth, over what economic power actually means, over the prevalence of monopoly, and over the living conditions of the poor. When put to the test of fact, this dissatisfaction supports itself by citing the disproportionate share of income going to the very richest, the concentration of wealth among a few families, and the great income and assets of some large corporations.

From these fragmentary statistics has come a moral denunciation of capitalism, or, to call the system by a more accurate name, of the free and private enterprise economy. The system, according to its modern liberal critics, is unjust and inadequate. It holds out great rewards to those with no more proper claim than the accident of being born wealthy, or of being skilled at chicanery, or having a flair for pandering to the public's lowest tastes. The system, they continue, separates the performance of social function from the title to income, and is unable to provide a proper income to all who contribute to its functioning. It has fallen, moreover, onto lean days and has about run its course, indeed would have expired sooner were it not for having been sustained by public spending and war.

The moralizing has been rich in exercises of wit. The most winning is the fable of the chickens and the elephant, which provides this article with its epigraph. It is also the most mistaken, gathering into a few words much of the modern liberals' misunderstanding about the economy. I wish to suggest that the problem of equality in a free society

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AMERICAN economic life, which is in a perpetual state of exhaustive self-scrutiny, is paradoxically enough also a *terra incognita*, known to most of the world, including many Americans, by way of prejudices and groundless theories rather than through the facts that are available. This article examines one of the most widespread beliefs about America: that the rich keep getting richer, the poor keep getting poorer, and wealth is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands with the passing of time. WILLIAM D. GRAMPP, associate professor of economics at the University of Illinois in Chicago, here analyzes this thesis, together with the corollary beliefs attached to it, and considers to what extent they are supported or contradicted by the available data, and to what extent they miss the point entirely. Mr. Grampp was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1914; he received his PhD from the University of Chicago.

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is not the need to arrange affairs in order that the chickens and the elephant shall stay out of each other's way, or that the chickens should be made into elephants, or elephants into chickens. For, upon close examination, we may discover that what we see is not, after all, an elephant dancing among chickens.

THIS requires that we look into some long-standing, highly honored, and most fanciful beliefs about the distribution of economic power. Let me set these down in such a way that they can be tested by fact:

(1) The distribution of income is grossly unequal and is becoming more unequal with time.

(2) The middle class is declining in economic importance.

(3) There is too little opportunity for a family to move from one income group to a higher one, because the barriers between classes are becoming more formidable.

(4) The working class rarely has enough income to maintain itself in health and efficiency.

(5) The ownership of capital is grossly unequal. The social power of America's leading families—the famous "sixty families"—is increasing dangerously.

(6) Free enterprise is being supplanted by monopoly, and monopoly is exploiting both consumers and workers.

It is something like these six propositions which must be in the minds of many liberals when they remark upon the injustice and inadequacy of the economy, or, to use their language, the "crisis of capitalism." It is notions of this kind which prompt the liberal weeklies to swallow any evidence of monopoly brought before a Congressional committee with a gullibility that the same editors would regard as absurd were the matter an investigation of subversive activity. Nor are the liberals alone in this respect; conservatives, and even many "reactionaries," are just as gullible.

Of course, there are few people in the United States who regard the collapse of capitalism as imminent. The most doctrinaire of amateur economists is aware of the high real incomes of the past ten years. Yet abroad, where the left wing still dwells in memories of the great depression, the tiniest bit of misinformation, already misconstrued in its American source, is wildly exaggerated and blown into a sententious statement about the recurrent crises of American capitalism. The *New Statesman and Nation* (whose economics has never been its strong point) often has regarded the Marshall Plan as a means of rescuing big business from the last and fatal depression—which analysis puts socialist Britain in the odd position of helping American capitalism save itself. The high profits of American business in 1950 were taken as evidence that the economy was sustained by war; the mild recession of 1949 was hardly less than fate slamming the gate on Wall Street. A CIO demand for a general wage increase is presented to English readers as additional evidence that American workers must struggle relentlessly against exploitation and impoverishment.

In the fundamental propositions which produce such an interpretation is the implicit assumption that there is an excessive concentration of economic power in the United States and that it is disclosed in three ways: in the distribution of income, in the absolute amount of real income, and in the prevalence of monopoly. There also is the more remote assumption that if economic power were distributed more equally there would follow great improvements of a political and cultural as well as of a material sort. I wish to set down what is known of the facts of income, wealth, and monopoly, and then to notice what seem to me to be the ruling considerations in the matter of inequality.

THE facts about the distribution of income are surprising, in a wry sort of way, because they offer so little support to received prejudice and because they are so much in agreement with common sense. It happens that the facts are more complete than ever because of the admirable surveys of consumer finances which the Federal Reserve Board has sponsored for the last six years.

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This is what the surveys reveal in answer to the six questions posed above:

(1) THE distribution of income is becoming less unequal. In 1949, the last year for which data are presently available, there was less inequality than in 1941. The share going to the poor was about the same in both years while that going to the rich decreased about 8 per cent. This information is summarized in the accompanying table, which shows the share of total income (before taxes) going to each fifth of the population. If income were distributed with perfect equality, each fifth of the population would receive a fifth of income; if income were distributed with absolute inequality, the top fifth would have 100 per cent of the income. The data in the table are from two different sources, and the one after 1947 defines income differently from that before. However, the definitions are similar enough to disclose any important change in income distribution.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

	Percentage of Total Income				
	1935-36	1941	1944	1947	1949
Poorest 20%	4.0	3.9	4.5	4.0	4.0
Second 20%	8.9	9.6	11.0	10.0	11.0
Third 20%	13.7	15.6	16.6	16.0	17.0
Fourth 20%	20.4	22.1	22.5	22.0	23.0
Richest 20%	53.4	48.8	45.4	48.0	45.0

Sources: Based upon data from the *American Economic Review*, XL, No. 2 (May 1950), p. 332; and the *Federal Reserve Bulletin* (August 1950), p. 955.

Among the richest fifth of the population, the top half, or 10 per cent of all spending units,* received 30 per cent of all income. Their minimum income was $7,500, which —in itself—is not what is thought of as great riches. However, there are no adequate figures on the share of total income received by the richest 2 or 3 per cent of all spending units; and statements about their economic power are hypothetical at best and at worst are mere predispositions given a spurious empirical basis. In its tabulation of income, the Board does not include explicit gains and losses from the sale of capital items, such as real estate, business interests, securities, etc.; these properly belong in the classification of wealth rather than income. Their effect on the distribution of wealth is uncertain because it is not known in which income classes there is a net gain. Since an above-average increase in the value of one capital item is offset by a below-average increase or a decrease in the value of another, changes in capital values would increase inequality only if the lower capital classes showed a net loss. The figures on the distribution of capital, given below, which tell us that relatively large amounts of capital are owned by some low-income groups and relatively small amounts by some high-income groups, suggest that capital gains and losses are widely distributed.

(2) THE table shows that while the *relative* position of the poorest 20 per cent has not improved—their share of the national income remaining the same in the past fifteen years (although the purchasing power, despite inflation, of this share has increased)—the share of the richest 20 per cent has decreased. The share going to the middle income groups is increasing, particularly the second and third 20-per-cent classes—the "lower middle" and "middle middle" classes. Between 1935-36 and 1949, the former's share increased about 22 per cent while that of the latter increased about 20 per cent. The portion going to the "upper middle" group increased about 10 per cent.

Hence, it is not true that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. The data show that the middle class is getting richer—is receiving a larger share of total income—at the expense of the highest income groups. The dirge has been premature which so long has played over the middle class.

The figures show the distribution of money income before personal income taxes have been paid. Income after direct taxes is distributed even more favorably to the 60 per

* A "spending unit" is a group of persons who share their individual income and expenses, and is not quite identical with a family.

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cent of the population who, in our table, make up the middle classes. It appears that the principal effect of direct taxation is to reduce the share going to the richest fifth and to increase the share of the middle groups rather randomly while the poor are unaffected. When account is taken of indirect taxes (sales taxes, excises, property levies, estate and gift taxes), the position of the middle classes is strengthened. These taxes fall most heavily in absolute amount on the rich and in relative amount on the poor. Actually, the middle classes have done quite well, and from the point of view of tax justice a bit too well.

Changes in the distribution of income over longer periods than the fifteen years shown in the table are difficult to measure, because earlier series define income much differently and are not comparable with later data. What information there is, suggests that the movement of recent years is part of a long trend away from income concentration. The economic historian Chester W. Wright, after studying the income tax returns filed in 1869-70, remarked: "Whereas the striking thing is the small number of the population having enough taxable income to make a return, it is also most significant that these returns indicate a greater concentration of income than has prevailed during the last quarter century [1915-1940]."

(3) CHANGES in the income position of a family are very common. Therefore, mobility—at least among economic classes—is common; there is no basis in fact for the common assertion that class barriers are hardening and that there is a grave decline in economic opportunity. This is implied by the increasing economic importance of the middle class, and it is shown directly by data on the frequency of income changes. In 1949, about 70 per cent of all spending units had a different income than in 1948, of which 30 per cent had lower and 40 per cent had higher incomes. In 1949, increases of 25 per cent or more in income were most frequent among clerical and sales employees and among spending units headed by fairly young persons (the 25-34 age group). Decreases of this size were most common among farmers and persons in the 35-44 age group.

Now it happens that the groups which had the greatest increases are usually found in the middle-income classes, and the amount of their income change was sufficient to move many into a higher middle-income category. The frequency of income changes does not, however, denote a mere milling about of the middle classes. Among the very poorest of 1948, about half had a higher income the following year, compared to 31 per cent among the rich who had higher incomes in 1949 than in 1948. It should be observed that the upward movement in the income scale in 1949 was not the product of inflation, because total personal income in 1949 was less than in 1948.

Changes in the income of spending units are so frequent and substantial that they cannot be ignored in appraising the extent of inequality. A distribution of income through time, as distinct from a distribution for a single year, the Board studies remark, would "probably have many more consumer units in the middle of the distribution and many fewer at either the high or low end than is found in a distribution based on incomes received in a single year."

The causes of income changes are not obvious. When individuals are asked why their incomes have risen or fallen, they usually reply that they have had a raise (or wage cut), that they have been working more (or less) steadily, that their business or farm has done better (or worse), that another member of the family has found a job (or lost one). However, behind these immediate causes are two more compelling factors. One is the changing state of the economy, and the other is the age of the income receiver.

It is a commonplace that the condition of particular markets is always changing. The price of eggs changes; so does the price of other food, of clothing, furniture, gadgets, transportation, the use of capital. Consequently there are simultaneous changes in the income from the sale of these products. So long as prices, or output, or both are free

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to fluctuate, there will be income fluctuations and movements of individuals from one income class to another.

In such an economy, subject to this kind of change, some persons will do better than others, because they will be more able to adapt themselves to altered conditions of production and consumption. If one may speculate from income data, they are the younger persons. In any year, there will be more increases in income among persons under 45 years of age than older; and there will be more decreased or constant incomes among those above 45 than below. What is perhaps the most interesting fact disclosed by the Board's studies—and one which may be overlooked because it is so pedestrian—is the connection between income and age. The data show that the very young and the very old are poor, that as individuals grow older their income increases until they are about 50, after which it begins to decline. The inequality between the younger people and the older—with the younger tending to better themselves at the expense of the older—is a salient fact too often overlooked.

(4) THE amount of real income has been increasing as well as becoming less unequal in its distribution. In this change, the position of the working class has been improving; and it must be understood that industrial workers are *not* among the very poor of the economy. Between 1936 and November 1950, the average weekly earnings of workers in manufacturing industries increased from $46 to $62, or about 35 per cent (measured in dollars of constant purchasing power). Between 1941 and 1951, the increase in real wages was about 25 per cent. Actually, the annual increase of the past ten years has been no more remarkable than the annual increase over the last century. Between 1850 and 1950, real income per person increased about 350 per cent. Concurrent with the rise in real wages has been a reduction of about 45 per cent in the length of the work week. Put another way, these figures mean that the average worker who earned $14 for a 66-hour week a century ago now earns about $62 for 36 hours. It should again be stressed that these are not "inflated" dollars, but are dollars of constant purchasing power: the figures take into account the rise in prices during that period.

There has, indeed, been too much attention devoted to the income of the working class and too little to the incomes of other members of the community. Modern liberals have been for so long under the spell of the proletarian myth that they have always assumed that the poor are the workers. It is interesting to know just who are the poor, and, equally interesting, who are the rich.

The very poorest in 1949 had an income of less than $1,000 (per spending unit). The individuals concerned were most often over 65, usually a couple whose earning days were behind them, and only one of whom had an income, most commonly a pension or an allowance. More of the poor were engaged in farming than in any other occupation, and only one in six was an unskilled, non-agricultural laborer. About two-thirds had no education beyond grammar school. There was a higher percentage of Negroes than whites in the lowest-income group, and there were more poor in rural areas than in cities.

The richest 10 per cent in 1949 had an income of $7,500 or more; within this income class were some who earned 10 to 100 times as much but whose numbers and share of income are unknown. Usually there were only two persons in the richest (above $7,500) families, and the most common age was between 45 and 54. Most were in managerial jobs or self-employed, lived in metropolitan areas, had a college education or beyond, and were white. Their income came mainly from salaries. Only a few had an appreciable income from capital: 16 per cent received dividends and interest of $1,000 or more, while 57 per cent received none at all; 4 per cent received rents of more than $1,000. About two in one hundred were retired, and conceivably might qualify as "idle rich."

The importance of salary income, as distinct from that earned by the ownership of

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capital, affirms what one would suspect from looking at the composition of the national income. Income earned by the sale of labor services is from two to three times as great as that earned from the ownership of capital. In 1950, the national income was about 230 billion dollars, of which 148 billions consisted of wages and salaries; the remaining 82 billions comprised business earnings, with a part representing a return on invested capital and a part the salaries and withdrawals of owners of unincorporated enterprises. If all capital were nationalized but with labor remaining free to choose its occupation, and if occupational differences remained (as they almost certainly would), there would still be inequality in the distribution of the two-thirds to three-fourths of the national income which consists of labor earnings. The very lowest incomes often are from the sale of labor services, and the very highest are almost always that. A redivision of profits, rent, and interest would leave this form of inequality untouched. This would be so even if capital earnings were confined to the highest 20 per cent of income receivers (or highest 40 per cent). Actually, there is a sizable ownership of capital among the low-income groups. Nationalization, therefore, would have no great effect on inequality.

The immediate cause of inequality is not the unequal distribution of capital but of labor skills, talent, and access to high wage and salary markets. The inequality could be reduced, of course, by taxation, the efficacy of which however has distinct limits. It is odd that modern liberals have given so much attention to the nationalizing of capital as a means of promoting distributive justice; it is even more curious that the industries which they propose to nationalize are not often those which over the long period yield the highest profits but instead are those, like steel, which are subject to violent fluctuations in earnings, or are those, like coal mining and the railroads, which are usually unprofitable and many of whose owners would be happy to have the government make them solvent once again.

(5) COMPARED to the information about income, the facts about the distribution of capital are meager and inconclusive. There is no reliable estimate of the national wealth; there is, actually, not even an estimate which is more than speculative. Consequently, it is highly conjectural, to say the least, to assert that a certain proportion is owned, dominated, controlled, or manipulated by America's sixty leading families (or six thousand or six million).

The best information about individual wealth comes again from the Federal Reserve Board studies. In early 1950, about 40 per cent of all spending units had a net worth of $5,000 or more. "Net worth" consists of the major part of a unit's assets (like a bank account, securities, business interest, house, automobile) less the major part of its debts (mortgage, installment buying balance, unpaid loans, etc.). The net worth figure represents about what a spending unit fully owns, or its capital. About 8 per cent of all units had capital of $25,000 or more. About 35 per cent had $1,000 or less, some of them less than nothing. *In each of the income classes, at least one-fourth of the units had capital of $5,000 or more.* Since a continuously poor spending unit could not have accumulated $5,000, the fact implies that some families in the lower-income groups were not always there but at one time had been richer. It also implies that some high-income families were at one time in a lower-income group, and had not been rich long enough to accumulate greater capital. The distribution of capital among all income classes reinforces the finding of the income study that there is much class mobility. The fact that the distribution of capital is more unequal than the distribution of income reinforces the finding that capital is less important than labor services as a source of income. If the distribution of income were determined by the ownership of capital, income would be distributed about as capital is.

The *very* wealthiest were those with a net worth of $25,000 or more—a figure, to be sure, which is not usually associated with

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great wealth but one which will have to do until accurate information is available about the sixty or six thousand leading families. The very wealthiest, according to the Board's studies, have incomes of $7,500 or greater, are usually in managerial positions, farming, or other self-employment, most often are sixty-five years old or more, and as a class owe most of the consumer debt. The very poorest (whose net worth is less than nothing) are unskilled and service workers, have incomes between $1,000 and $5,000, are between 18 and 24 years old. The middle classes (whose net worth is between $1,000 and $5,000) are usually professional and semi-professional workers, have incomes between $3,000 and $4,000, are between 25 and 34 years old. These characteristics show the importance of age in the distribution of wealth as well as of income. Those families which become wealthy spend many years in accumulating capital, and if they fail they are quite poor. From the point of view of net worth, the aged are, more than other groups, polarized into the very poor and the very rich.

The forms of wealth owned by the rich are revealing. The most common are liquid assets (government bonds and bank accounts), a house, other real estate, and a business interest. Corporation securities are notably absent from the list. Stock is owned by only 32 per cent of the richest. Among all stockholders, rich and not so rich, three-fourths have stock valued at $5,000 or less. This group doubtless owns less than 75 per cent of all corporation stock, and the one-fourth of all stockholders whose holdings exceed $5,000 own more than one-fourth of the capital in American corporations.

It is thus fairly certain that the distribution of corporate wealth is far more concentrated than the distribution of total wealth. It is this fact which has given rise to the presumption that the economy is controlled by a small group of families. But the best measure of economic power is income, which gives an individual the ability to command a portion of the economy's productive resources and of the national product. Economic power is, in other words, spending power, and the power to spend is determined by income, which in turn is obtained only in relatively small part from capital ownership, and is derived mainly from the sale of labor services. Corporate wealth is only a part of the total wealth, and the power which it gives is not at all the large and certain magnitude it commonly is thought to be.

(6) THE inequality of corporate ownership, however great, does not prove that monopoly has supplanted free enterprise. It does not even prove that competition is declining. It does prove that restraint of trade would be potentially easier *if* the relatively few owners of corporations wanted to practice it. The real test of the degree of monopoly is the extent of collusion. We should like to know what percentage of the national income is produced in industries in which one firm, or a group of firms acting collusively, determines price and output. We should like also to know what portion of the national income is produced in industries in which the number of firms is so few that each of them has dominant pricing power. Unfortunately, the facts are not conclusive.

The supposition of widespread monopoly usually rests upon the fact of an unequal distribution of corporate sales, net worth, or a related magnitude. For example, before World War II the 100 largest manufacturing corporations produced 33 per cent of all manufactured output and employed 20 per cent of all workers engaged in manufacturing. The Temporary National Economic Committee gathered together much information, before the last war, about markets in which a few firms produced the major part of the output. Yet the findings of the committee were inconclusive. In his final report, the executive secretary said: "Among 1,807 products, representing nearly half, by number, and more than half, by value, of those included in the Census of Manufacturing for 1937, there were 291, or more than one-sixth in the sample, in which the leading

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producer accounted for 50 to 75 per cent of the total supply."

I take this to mean that the most monopolistic section of manufacturing consisted of about 600 markets, in each of which one firm had from 50 to 75 per cent monopoly power, and in the sum of which about 17 per cent of the total amount of manufactured goods was produced. These facts, stated in another way, show that in 1937 about 17 cents out of each dollar's worth of manufactured goods were produced in conditions of substantial, although not complete, monopoly. George J. Stigler has concluded from the findings of the committee and from other sources that from 55 to 67 per cent of the national income was produced under conditions of effective competition in 1939.

The National Resources Committee disclosed in 1936 that there were extensive connections among large corporations in all industries. They were related by stock ownership, common directorates, banking affiliations, personal ties, and in other ways. The committee said, and the Temporary National Economic Committee repeated: "While it is certain that the extensive economic activity represented by these corporations is in no sense subject to a single centralized control, it is equally certain that the separate corporations are not completely independent of each other." The National Resources Committee ended its statement of findings with the question, which it did not attempt to answer: "What is the significance of the existence of more or less closely integrated interest groupings for the pricing process?"

The question is one aspect of the more general question: What is the degree of monopoly power in the economy? In looking for an answer, it is prudent to make the plain distinction between markets which are substantially controlled by monopoly (in which, say, more than three-fourths of the output is sold by a single organization) and markets in which the number of firms is too small for the efficiency of competition to make itself known. It is rash to think that where competition is absent, there monopoly must be. There are many industries which are not efficiently competitive—like the automobile, in which three firms produce most of the product—but it usually will be found that these industries are not monopolistic. In such few-firm, imperfectly competitive markets there usually is rivalry, and it is often stronger and more fierce than in more widely competitive markets. It is, in fact, these markets which exhibit the effects of what is commonly and mistakenly called "competition": the aggressive, piratical, and wasteful effort to capture sales, rather than the effort to lower costs through efficiency. The businessmen in such industries believe it is only they who really understand what "competition" is, and they are bewildered when accused of monopoly, of which indeed they usually are innocent.

Collusion among the leading firms in such industries is fairly easy to initiate and most difficult to sustain. Having made what is an unenforceable contract, the firms must rely upon the honor of all to secure it. Extra-legal and illegal penalties may intimidate those who would later withdraw, but these measures cannot compel obedience. The economic history of the past seventy-five years is littered with the debris of shrewdly conceived and poorly sustained collusive agreements.

EVEN where substantial monopoly does exist, its power is not always completely exploited. Although it may come as a surprise to some, it is one of the realities of economic life that many firms could exercise more monopoly power than they do but restrain themselves for a variety of reasons. One is the fear of attracting competition. J. R. Hicks has remarked that "the best of all monopoly profits is a quiet life," on the plausible assumption that the captains of industry have moments of common humanity as well as exhilaration from their world of telegrams and anger. They also are restrained by the fear of government action: an investigation by a Congressional committee, an order from the Federal Trade Commission, a prosecution undertaken by the Anti-Trust

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Division. A friend in the automobile industry tells me that his company (one of the large ones) is forever grateful for the survival of the smaller firms, because it knows their disappearance would immediately evoke clamors for public action against the supposed monopoly of the big three.

More important than voluntary restraint is the fact of economic change. Established firms are under continual assault by the development of new products, improvements in old, by changes in consumer taste and income, by other firms' finding ways to lower their production costs, by population increase and geographical movement, by changing public opinion and political power. Of the eight almost perfect monopolies in the United States about the year 1900, only one is still in existence. The others were broken up by anti-trust action and by the kinds of change noted here.

Within large firms, whether monopolies or not, there is also a form of compulsory restraint on the exercise of power. Aware that their position never is secure, these firms surround themselves with those protective devices which competition automatically establishes. The large firms separate into smaller units, require that each make its own way, and occasionally that they compete among themselves. The outstanding instance of this is General Motors. Each of its automobile divisions is free to buy parts from a supply organization within the corporation or one outside it, and as each division tries to show a profit on its operations, it buys where the price is lowest.

The most fundamental restraint upon monopoly power is the competition of the products of other industries, some of which also may be monopolies. This competition is most apparent among goods and services which are close substitutes: automobiles vs. railroads vs. buses vs. airlines, etc. It is no less real among products which seem quite unrelated in consumption but which in fact compete for the consumer's dollar. Automobiles compete with television sets, books with travel, liquor with the movies, clothing with furniture, a summer in the country with an expensive winter in the city. The consumer, it has been remarked, is a much neglected creature. What in reality has been neglected, or underestimated, is his ability to make his will known and to resist, if not always to overcome, the plundering of monopoly. Pushed around he has been, but he has not been defeated, as certain enterprises (like dairy farms) have learned to their great expense.

The facts about monopoly and about the distribution of income and of wealth are important and curious. They demonstrate how foolish are many of the current persuasions about the economy, and they are curious for having had so little effect in altering these persuasions. However, the facts also demonstrate that inequality is real, whether viewed in the fundamental sense of the unequal distribution of income, or in the less significant sense of inequality in the distribution of wealth and of corporate assets. Although the distribution of income in the United States is constantly becoming more equal, there are few persons who believe it is presently distributed in the right (ethically tolerable) way. Monopoly is less common than supposed, but the present condition of many markets cannot be regarded with complacency. Their imperfectly competitive state creates losses in the national income and retards the movement toward its better distribution.

In appraising the possible solutions to inequality, one ought to remember always the common sense observation that the unequal distribution of economic power is only one aspect of inequality. All persons do not have the same income and wealth; nor do all have the same wisdom, virtue, talent, taste, color, religion, family, health, wit, or social presence. If economic power were distributed with exact equality the other perquisites still would fall very unevenly among individuals and would cause much restiveness. There is no anthropological or sociological evidence to show that among communities where economic power is distributed evenly there

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necessarily is no antagonism, rivalry, or conflict.

An equal distribution of economic power could, indeed, make non-economic rivalries more troublesome. It often strikes one as irrational that families try to beggar their neighbors by their wealth, that business firms should try to build inefficient empires, that their executives should be touched with megalomania, that labor unions should insist on uniform treatment of all workers irrespective of their individual differences. Yet, as Keynes observed, the passion for dominion may be much more dangerous outside the market than within it, and so long as people will make fools of themselves it is best to let them do it in the least harmful way. One has only to think of racial rivalries to realize that economic conflict is not the most virulent of disorders.

Yet it is highly unreal to suppose that economic power itself could be distributed in a more tolerable way simply by rearranging the economic organization. To take the direction of affairs from the market and place it with the state is to follow a course which only the most sanguine can regard hopefully. It is perhaps unsporting to call attention to the inequality of income in the Soviet Union, which appears to be greater than in the United States, and to ask whether the concentration of economic power with the state has delivered the Russian people to a happy upland of justice and prosperity. It is perhaps more to the point to call attention to the British effort, where socialism has the inestimable advantage of working its reforms among a people of remarkable ability for self-government. In the United Kingdom, income has been redistributed with greater equality than in any other nation. Yet the socialists themselves are alarmed at the gross inefficiency of planning and are dismayed by the great increase in the power of the state. Some of their leading economists now insist on a return to the market mechanism wherever possible, and, according to the former head of their economic secretariat, J. E. Meade, such possibilities are extensive.

This is not an apology for the existing state of affairs in the United States, which ought to be improved. But it is meant to warn against expecting too much from a reduction in economic inequality, even where that is possible. A policy meant to reduce inequality would have to begin by determining its major causes. Individuals with higher than average incomes have their favored position because of superior ability, or monopolistic restrictions which exclude competitors from their labor market. If it is the latter, it is remediable, to a degree. For example, the income of physicians would be less above the average if their professional association permitted the medical schools to accept as many students as they now have facilities for. The income of building-trades workers, and of certain other "skilled" groups, would be less if unions admitted more workers to the labor market. The return to certain business firms would be nearer the average rate if they were not sheltered by such laws as the tariff acts, the Miller-Tydings Act, the Robinson-Patman Act, the Webb-Pomerene Act, etc. Agricultural income, especially that going to the richest farmers, would be lower if it were not for protective agricultural legislation.

In appraising income differentials created by monopoly, society has only to decide whether the favored groups are entitled to their plums for reasons other than their political or economic power. It has to decide whether carpenters, plumbers, and their fellow workers occupy so distinguished a place in society that they must be kept in jobs at wages which make adequate housing (by pre-war economic standards) too expensive for all but the very rich, while technological advance is deliberately stifled. Society has to know whether agriculture is so important a form of enterprise that it must be preserved by subsidizing several million farmers, including many who are anything but poor. Society must decide why woolens and wines made in America are so distinctly superior to foreign products and so unappreciated by the American consumer that they must be kept in production by high tariffs. In plain lan-

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guage, none of this monopolistic practice makes any sense if viewed simply in an economic way. If any group in the economy is to take income away from another (and reduce the total in the taking) it should have a better argument than the blackjack of superior voting power or of syndicalist coercion.

It is monopolies of this kind which threaten a genuinely liberal society. The injury they do is enormous in comparison with the power for evil exercised by the large corporations in America—these latter have no political sanction for their efforts. This monopoly power is dangerous because it has the explicit approval of law and because many of the individuals who exercise it are prohibited from doing anything else. Farmers who would like to compete because their costs are lower are stifled by the cartels administered by the Department of Agriculture. Workers who would like to earn higher wages because they are more productive are forced into inefficiency by the work rules of unions supported by federal labor legislation. Large retailers who want to pass on their lower selling costs to consumers are hamstrung by "fair trade" legislation. American exporters who would like to give the world a taste of honest free trade are frustrated by a network of restriction in which tariff-sheltered American industries participate.

Politically supported monopoly has been increasing. Should it continue to develop, the American economy will drift, or be pushed, into a syndicalist condition, surrounded no doubt by the rhetoric of social justice, orderly marketing, stable prices, fair wages, etc., while its actual existence will be fixed by irresponsible assertions of power as each group tries to score against all others. In its purely economic aspect, a syndicalist economy is grossly inefficient, because each vested interest can gain a larger share of the national income only by restricting production *more* than any other group does. It is the Caucus Race in reverse, in which everyone loses a prize. One cannot measure how much the American economy already has been impoverished by syndicalism, but it is fairly certain that the loss is much greater than most persons suspect. They become agitated over scandals of the kind uncovered in the recent crime investigation or in the RFC inquiry, while they happily ignore the billions of income which are lost or diverted by legalized monopoly.

As CRUDE and as flagrant as they are, legal monopolies are not the most difficult to remove. The more fundamental problem of monopoly is created by those persons whose unusual talents and distinctly superior ability yield the very highest incomes in the economy. The roll includes business magnates, lawyers, actors, pugilists, crooners, baseball players, and others who have an ability which is much in demand and little in supply. This ability obviously has no necessary connection with wisdom, virtue, creative talent, or any of those other qualities which society admires but is not often willing to pay for. Much has been written of the great rewards which the American system of free enterprise holds out to those of superior ability, and, like all tautologies, it is very true: the kind of ability which earns a high income is defined as the ability to earn a high income. This principle would be respected in any kind of an economic system which decided to give the population what it wanted, and not what was good for it.

The condition could be mitigated if individuals wanted the "proper" things—symphonies rather than television acts. But they don't. The prospect of reforming individual preferences is not a cheering one, and the task would be singularly unrewarding even if leaders could be found with the taste for that sort of thing. Yet even so vast a reform would not work a substantial improvement in the distribution of income. There would, it is true, be a correspondence between economic and non-economic values, but the ability to create the "proper" things would itself not be uniformly distributed. There would remain the few who excel in intelligence and creative ability.

This kind of ability is not only scarce. It

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is distributed in a way which is without ethical justification. Whether a man is a genius or a fool or a mediocrity will depend on his inheritance, and this of course is given by the chance of birth. Some few will be lucky, most will not. The fortunate ones will have high incomes, the others will do less well. Indeed, it is luck which determines the very highest incomes in any kind of an economy which rewards ability. It is irrelevant how ability is defined and what is its relation to non-economic values. Whether the economy rewards the wise and the good and the creative, or whether it honors the leaders of men, the film stars, and the person who can turn out a fanciful gadget—it necessarily rewards scarcity. The economy, of course, could arbitrarily take income away from the "able" and give it to the less "able," but such an act would leave the basic problem untouched. What an equalitarian society presumably seeks is better men, not merely less disparity of income.

Once we look to the causes of scarcity of ability, we are confronted with the odd fact that it is the product of chance. It is as though income were distributed in the manner of a giant lottery, except that there are very few who get no prize at all. One can listen to a justification for distributing income according to effort or according to need. Each of these ethical defenses has a respectable argument to offer. But there is no ethical defense for distributing income according to chance, and it would take a strange turn of mind to concoct one.

There is, of course, one way to remove the chance distribution of ability and hence of economic power. Since a child's ability depends on the family into which he is born, it may be altered by a program of eugenic control, which would require at least the elimination of the family. There are not many who have been so disturbed by economic inequality that they have been driven to this desperate remedy. But there have been some, like Plato and Marx, and a few other extremists.

BOREDOM

SOL STEIN

Mine enemy comes with the frequency
of death.
The eye in unexpected quarters catches
Silent hushes, akimbo-armed, standing stock
And watching, winding grinding ratchets.

The grate of time is like the grate of death.
The sound of time predicts the sound
of keening
Coming. Moments accumulate the body's
dust
In corners of the brain. The sky is leaning.

The silence of it all is death.
And death is rain. The raining starts
And lasts these forty days or hours
Till weather floods the hollows of the heart.
Rain against the windowpane is death.
The waters rise and seconds swell
Like the bloating of a corpse. Taps
Bugled. The foot taps. Clocks tell

Time, the conscious counterfeit
of death.
Moments pass with every forfeit breath
And linking, form the yawning gaps
Of history. History is full of death.

But a brittle bit of time now breaks.
Ears tingle toward the sudden leak of sound.
Ho time, hear near the quaking
of events.
Mine enemy avast! There's a rumbling
in the ground.

Sol Stein, who lectures in social studies at the City College of New York, has published poetry and articles in various periodicals.

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WHAT DOES THE BAR MITZVAH SIGNIFY?

A Traditional Ceremony in Its American Version

THEODOR H. GASTER

TO THE average Jewish father, his son's Bar Mitzvah is scarcely less important than his daughter's wedding. However far he may himself have strayed from the ancestral fold, he usually insists that at the prescribed age of thirteen years his male offspring shall be duly and properly inducted, with all attendant traditional ceremony, into full membership in the House of Israel.

What the boy may do about it later, he concedes, is his own concern; but at least he must be given the chance, on entering manhood, to take his place in the community of his fathers. To deny him that chance is to deny him his birthright and gratuitously to repudiate both the past and the future. Amid the din and clamor of the world, the muffled cry of the exiled Divine Presence still makes itself heard.

This feeling about Bar Mitzvah has been strengthened, no doubt, by the force of recent events—by a deepening sense of the solidarity of Israel, a clearer apprehension of the truth that survival entails obligation and that every Jew has a duty today to stand up and be counted. Quite apart, however, from this understandable reaction to persecution, genuine religious sentiment on the one hand and mere atavistic nostalgia on the other have themselves proved sufficient, over several generations, to make of the ceremony and celebration one of the major institutions of Jewish life. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any other institution (short of circumcision and burial) can claim so widespread and devoted an adherence. On the American scene in particular, it has come to acquire such social import and éclat as even to give rise to a special profession of "Bar Mitzvah teachers" and a large (and presumably lucrative) industry of "Bar Mitzvah caterers."

Nevertheless, if the candid truth be told, Bar Mitzvah possesses the singular distinction of being, for all its popularity, the one Jewish institution that suffers today more from observance than from neglect. For the plain fact is that in current practice and belief its true character has been all but effaced, its significance dimmed and distorted—perhaps even transmuted into its opposite.

TO NINE out of ten Jews today, the term Bar Mitzvah denotes a *ceremony;* and that ceremony is invested with all the qualities of a sacrament. After due training and preparation (for which father usually pays in much the same spirit as for daughter's trousseau), the adolescent male stands up in the synagogue, one Sabbath morn, and reads from the Scroll either the whole or a portion of the lesson from the Law, often enhancing this demonstration of virtuosity (and, incidentally, his parents' pride and his teacher's salary) by adding also a reading from the Prophets. By this performance he is automatically acknowledged as an adult Jew, with all the privileges and obligations thereunto appertaining. Then, as a kind of supplementary

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THIS month will witness the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and with it the customary flood of Bar Mitzvahs—or, as some would say, confirmations—in many Conservative and Reform synagogues. The ceremony, which is neither so ancient nor so obligatory as is generally thought, has become one of the most emphatically observed rituals in American Jewish life. Here, THEODOR H. GASTER examines its history, the role it now plays in the American Jewish community, and the extent to which it accomplishes its aims. Dr. Gaster, formerly chief of the Hebraic section of the Library of Congress, has just been appointed visiting professor of the religion and mythology of the Ancient Near East at the University of Rome for the academic year 1951-2. His most recent article in COMMENTARY was "What Does the Seder Celebrate?" in the April issue.

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"initiation ordeal," he has to endure being ponderously addressed, over a ponderous meal, by a succession of distant relatives, ecclesiastical functionaries, and otherwise innocuous family friends; and to these divers encomia and exhortations he is expected to reply in a brief but apposite discourse on the very intriguing theme: Today I am a man. Furthermore, in token of the religious solemnity and the secular significance of the occasion, he is customarily presented with a silken prayer shawl (in embroidered bag), a set of phylacteries, a brand new prayer book, and innumerable fountain pens; all of which objects except the last become, as a rule, mere souvenirs—as utterly and completely afunctional as a doctoral sheepskin.

Now, the trouble with all of this is that it turns the *real* institution of Bar Mitzvah upside down and inside out, detaching it from the context which alone gives it sense.

The term *bar mitzvah*—literally, "son of the commandment"—means properly "a legally responsible member of the Jewish community." What it denotes, therefore, is not a ceremony but a status. Moreover, that status is not automatically acquired (as is commonly thought) by mere physical transition from boyhood to manhood, nor—like Christian grace and salvation—by the performance of a ritual act. It is, in essence, an academic degree; and a Jew can only become bar mitzvah if he satisfies the proper rabbinical authorities concerning his mental and intellectual competence and his intention to accept in deed, and not merely in word, the full responsibilities of the Jewish faith. Like citizenship, the status of bar mitzvah is not a matter of a single moment; it is a continuing condition. The graybeard of eighty is just as much a bar mitzvah as the youth of thirteen; and when we use the term, we should think not of a young boy on a Saturday morning, but of any conscious, "committed" Jew through the whole of his adult life.

To shift the emphasis from the status to the ceremony is thus to put the cart before the horse. The ceremony is not prescribed in Jewish law and was not even known before the Middle Ages.* It is in no sense a sacramental rite. It confers nothing, imparts nothing, creates nothing; it merely celebrates. When the fledgling bar mitzvah stands up in the synagogue and reads his "portion," he is, in fact, in much the same position as the citizen who goes to the polls for the first time. That citizen is not thereby acquiring citizenship; all he is doing—albeit with an extra flourish—is to exercise for the first time one of its particular privileges to which he has now become entitled.

Viewed in proper perspective, the institution of Bar Mitzvah stands in the same relationship to Jewry as citizenship to a nation. It is predicated, however, upon a unique conception. That conception is that the Jewish people is not a mere fortuitous aggregation of individuals, but a sacred society—a self-dedicated "kingdom of priests"—dedicated to the practical expression of the Torah (as interpreted progressively throughout the generations) and to the attestation of God's presence in the world of men: Ye are My witnesses. Jews are not considered automatically—either by divine fiat or by race—participants in this mission; but for the mission to be fulfilled, it is necessary that every individual Jew shall be a trained and active combatant in the ranks. This and this alone is what is meant by being bar mitzvah. Anyone who evades this obligation, or denies the premise upon which it is based, is simply not a Jew in any proper sense of the term; he has no portion of Jacob, nor inheritance in Israel —no stake in the emergent future, no "share in the world to come."

ONCE its true basis is grasped, the actual procedure by which the status of bar mitzvah is acquired becomes readily intelligible.

First, as to the age. A Jew becomes bar mitzvah at thirteen because, in Eastern countries, that was (and often is) the customary age of marriage. Accordingly, at the age of thirteen a youth actually became the

*On the history of the institution, those who read Hebrew may consult Isaac Rivkind's excellent work *Bar Mitzvah* (New York, 1942), where a full bibliography is given.

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founder of a household, and it was therefore both logical and appropriate that he should then be admitted as an adult member of the community. In other words, the choice of age was neither arbitrary nor artificial; it was determined by the consideration that at thirteen the young man did, in fact, qualify for the status which the institution envisaged.

Second, as to the antecedent training. This was not—as it is today—a mere perfunctory preparation for a specific event. It was a solid initiation into Jewish life, based on the premise that all human conduct should be channeled and controlled by sound factual knowledge and the ability to form judgments by it. For that reason, it was deemed necessary that the bar mitzvah candidate should demonstrate to the authorities not only his command of actual data but also his *ability to think;* he had to show that he could follow a rabbinic disputation and that the involutions and subtleties of pilpulistic argument were not beyond his comprehension. He was expected, in fact, to produce something very like a dissertation in the form of an oral discourse (*derashah*) publicly delivered. Pedagogues may criticize the matter and frown on the manner of this ancient curriculum, but its underlying principle can scarcely be contested—the principle that no one who is not generally literate, specifically versed in its traditional lore, and actively conscious of its mission should be admitted to full membership in the House of Israel or have a voice in its affairs.

In setting up this principle, Judaism offered a positive and valuable contribution to the concept of social responsibility. The principle was entirely democratic: every Jew was eligible to become bar mitzvah; the knowledge by which he qualified for that status was knowledge in the public domain and not, as in the puberty rites of so many cultures, special and secret lore; and the society into which he was admitted was the community as a whole and not, as elsewhere, some particular, esoteric group within it. At the same time, the principle protested the facile assumption that social privilege is an inherent and inalienable right, and it demanded that it be earned by qualification. What applies to the professions of law and medicine today was thus applied also to social status: license had to be earned by requisite knowledge. To the principle "No taxation without representation" Judaism replies, "No representation without taxation"; but the taxation which it envisages is that of the mind and heart. No representation without education.

Third, as to the actual ceremony of Bar Mitzvah. From the strictly historical point of view, this would appear to be a relatively late innovation, not definitely attested before the 14th century. Traditionally, the duty of the Jewish father is simply to see that his son, by the time he reaches the age of thirteen, is equipped with sufficient religious education to enable him to discharge the responsibilities of that adult state upon which he enters. It is, however, a sound instinct which now requires that the new bar mitzvah present himself in the synagogue and there attest his status by means of a public ceremony. For this requirement is founded on the truth that the House of Israel, to which he is admitted, is not an ideal abstraction but a concrete reality and consists actually in the aggregate of Jewish congregations. It is a society, not a concept; and a man cannot be a member of it except through the medium of communal affiliation. (Strictly and formally speaking, the so-called "unattached Jew" is a living contradiction in terms.) At the same time, the congregation is itself but an aggregate of households, not an independent, transcendental entity. Accordingly, the bar mitzvah does not become a full member of the congregation without also becoming a responsible member of a particular household. The "initiation" is thus twofold, and for this reason the ceremony takes place both in the synagogue and in the home. Then, too, it must be borne in mind that, while the bar mitzvah *enters* the community, the community *receives* him, so that the synagogal ceremony in fact possesses the double character of an introduction on the one hand and a reception on the other.

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In the current treatment of the institution, almost all of these values have been lost. It has become quite a different institution, which accomplishes almost none of its old functions and has taken on a few new and surprising ones. Perhaps something valuable may still be made of the resultant mixture, but first let us consider how far we have strayed from its original intention.

In the first place, in Western society today a boy of thirteen is not, in fact, an adult; he is still a minor. He does not marry, does not become a responsible member of a household, and cannot enter into legal obligations. Moreover, within the sphere of the Jewish community itself, he is not—as a rule—eligible for full membership in the congregation and certainly not for any active voice or executive position in communal affairs. (Indeed, even if—theoretically—he were to be appointed to such office, the law of the land would automatically withhold from him the necessary powers to discharge it.) Even in the State of Israel, the status of bar mitzvah does not of itself admit to the rights of an adult citizen. To be sure, the bar mitzvah boy is reckoned thenceforth as one of the ten males required to form a *minyan*, but the *minyan* itself—which is really the minimal community—has degenerated to the level of a mere formal quorum for public devotions. Moreover, on the American scene, the boy actually is often relegated, in point of fact, to membership in a "junior congregation"—a device which deprives him of his "civil rights" and which amounts to handing him the latchkey and then telling him to find other accommodation! In short, the status to which he is admitted by the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah is today entirely nominal; what is granted *de jure* is denied *de facto*.

Yet if we were to attempt to make bar mitzvah correspond today to any real status by advancing the minimal age to that at which a young man actually reaches his legal majority in Western society, we would find very few young men who would willingly and readily accept the status. This shows that the real character of the institution as a conscious, responsible status, accepted in freedom, has virtually disappeared. What survives is the empty shell—a rather meaningless ceremony imposed upon an innocent youngster in his teens.

Then there is the question of preliminary training. In most cases, this is purely perfunctory; it is totally insufficient to equip the bar mitzvah for the status which the institution properly envisages. As often as not, it is a mere preparation for the ceremony itself, complete with "audio-visual" aids and similar contrivances of modern pedagogy—contrivances designed to make the physical ears and eyes do duty for the moribund or atrophied or television-conditioned mind. Within a few months preceding the ceremony, the bar mitzvah candidate is rushed through a course of memorizing his "portion" (often with the aid of a "pony" which carefully transcribes it into Roman characters) and introduced, in purely superficial and homiletic fashion, to the externals of Jewish observance. Rarely is the instruction related to any live cultural environment; as a rule, its frame of reference is solely the ritual of synagogue and home. It is presented as something *in*jected into, rather than *pro*jected out of, the life of the Jew—a kind of creedal indoctrination, all foreground and no background. The Hebrew which is taught is described, with disarming candor, as frankly "functional," the function being to enable the bar mitzvah candidate to "find the place" in the prayer book and to "follow the service" and thus save embarrassment to himself and his parents. In a word, what is instilled into him is a mere reflex acquiescence in established forms.

To be sure, there are a number of rabbis—notably in Reconstructionist and Reform circles—and likewise a number of more enlightened Jewish boards of education, who have tried to set up more adequate standards by insisting that the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah be performed only after so many years of continuous education in the religious school. Even this, however, can scarcely suffice, so long as the average religious school remains what it is today. Every honest inquirer

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knows, and every conscientious educator will admit, that the present level is abysmally low and the customary curriculum woefully inadequate. Far more is needed to equip a responsible Jew in a predominantly Gentile world than was required in the days when life was concentrated in a more exclusively Jewish environment and less liable to be buffeted, at almost every turn, by the impact of different and conflicting ideologies. An educational program today has to do more than merely impart traditional lore; it has also to provide the student with at least an elementary grasp of current affairs and an understanding of the factors which determine the status of the Jews in the contemporary world. Moreover, much of the traditional lore itself now stands in a different light from heretofore. (Archaeology, for example, has placed a new complexion on the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan—events which occupy a cardinal and quasi-dogmatic position in Jewish religious thought.) The old-time content of the courses and the method of their presentation has therefore to be radically revised. It no longer suffices to spend the hours of instruction in mere repetitions of Bible tales, formal descriptions of Jewish observances, "inspirational" talks about Jewish "ideals," and—the cutting out of paper dolls. Not, however, until we get an adequate supply of qualified, certified, and properly remunerated teachers can any relief be expected. Accordingly, to prescribe a length of time during which a child must be subjected to the present system is no solution of the problem. What is important is not the length but the quality of the training. Besides, how can the necessary ground possibly be covered in the two or three hours of a Sunday morning during which, at the present time, the synagogue plays spiritual baby-sitter for somnolent mothers and golfing fathers?

Lastly, it should be observed that, when the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah is today performed in the synagogue, the implications are appreciably different from what they were in the past. In former days, the synagogue was the center of all collective Jewish life, and not merely a house of worship. To be introduced into the synagogue was therefore to be inducted into the community. Today, however, almost all communal activities which are not strictly religious are distributed over extra-synagogal organizations. In point of fact, therefore, the new bar mitzvah is introduced only into a congregation of worshipers (and even that is not usually present, but only family, friends, and business acquaintances, most of them not synagogue members), not into a community.

This, of course, is merely one of the consequences of the forced detachment of Jewish life (outside of the State of Israel) from its cultural matrix. The institution of Bar Mitzvah is one of the casualties of that detachment. By that very token, however, the solution of the problem which it today presents is necessarily bound up, in the final analysis, with the larger issue of the reformulation of Jewish life in general.

THE problem of Bar Mitzvah at the present day has a twofold character. First, in terms of the institution *per se*, the question arises: how, if the present form is inadequate, can its broad purpose and objective—that of guaranteeing that every member of the House of Israel shall be fully conversant with its traditions and actively participate in its mission—now be secured? Second, there is the question: how, if at all, can the traditional ceremony be salvaged and given meaning?

During the past hundred years, under the initial impetus of the Reform movement, the favorite solution has been to substitute for the individual Bar Mitzvah ceremony a collective "confirmation" of juveniles at the festival of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), this date being chosen because it is the traditional anniversary of the Conclusion of the Covenant and the Giving of the Law and therefore peculiarly appropriate as the time when new Israelites shall be formally inducted into the fold. The advantage of this system, it is claimed, is that the festival of Pentecost happens to coincide, more or less, with the end of the school year, and the

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ceremony can thus become one of graduation—the logical climax to years of study. Moreover, on this basis, it can be open to girls as well as boys and thus take cognizance of the fact that the social and communal status of women has indeed changed appreciably since the days when the traditional Bar Mitzvah was established.

This solution, however, is tenable only on the express assumption that confirmation is not a mere amended form of Bar Mitzvah but something entirely different—a ceremony of graduation and affirmation of faith. For if it is intended to serve the original purpose of Bar Mitzvah—namely, to admit the adolescent Jew as a full member of the community—then clearly, it no more effects its pretensions than does the time-honored usage. The confirmand is *de facto* just as much debarred as is the bar mitzvah, and his preparation is as incomplete. From this point of view, the problem remains exactly where it was, and the ceremony, though more spectacular, is no whit less hollow.*

THE existing ceremony of religious graduation does have a real function: our problem is created by the fact that it is not the function of the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah. Could we not, however, honestly recognize the present ceremony as a kind of initial matriculation, and add another, at a more mature age, which would have the value of full graduation, and which would really take over the function of the Bar Mitzvah institution?

At the present moment, what happens is that the two stages are confused. As I have suggested, the lad of thirteen is, so to speak, being handed a cap and gown but denied any graduate standing. To put it differently, he is being given a certificate of citizenship without enjoying civil rights. And the fact of the matter is that he is indeed not yet qualified, by age, knowledge, or experience, to receive such standing or enjoy such rights. On the other hand, when he really attains majority and is actually qualified to be bar mitzvah—that is, to be a full member of the community with all its privileges and obligations—there is no ceremony whatsoever. He slides in on the basis of a subscription, and there is no test of his qualification or of his intention actively to play his part.

Now, by the system I would propose, not only can the present ceremony be salvaged and given meaning, but the broad institution of Bar Mitzvah can be reinforced. The first ceremony—the present Bar Mitzvah at thirteen—would have the force of confirmation. It would mark the close of initial religious education—a graduation from high school. But it would not admit to adult status in the House of Israel, nor to membership in the adult congregation. The confirmand could become, however, a member of the junior congregation, which would thus acquire an organic place in Jewish life.

Then, after a further period of preparation, when he is indeed legally an adult, he would be admitted to the senior congregation. But such admission would again be dependent on a test of qualification and an accompanying ceremony of induction. In this way, a guarantee would be furnished that every congregation of Jews really consists of trained, conscious, responsible, and active members of the House of Israel. It would be a method of turning the profession of Judaism into an active campaign, instead of a mute acquiescence; it would eliminate malingering in the ranks of God.

From the practical point of view, such a system would also facilitate the drawing up of adequate curriculums of Jewish education. At the present moment, one of the major problems is that a great deal of adult knowledge has to be crammed into the head of the thirteen-year-old because there is small chance of his remaining in school after Bar

*It should be observed, in this connection, that the name confirmation is, in any case, misleading. The term has been adopted, albeit unconsciously, from Christian practice, where confirmation is a *sacrament*. What it confirms is not, as is often thought, the adherence of the individual to the Christian faith, but rather the baptismal bestowal of grace. Originally, in fact, baptism and confirmation (called "sealing") took place at the same time or within a very short interval. To avoid misunderstanding, therefore, it would be well if the use of this name were given up; "religious graduation" would be more to the point.

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Mitzvah, and he has consequently to be prepared for Judaism in his childhood or not at all. By the proposed system, however, the progress of Jewish education could be properly organized and graded, and there could be a proper and methodical distinction—which there is not today—between high school and undergraduate instruction. The fact is that this would better correspond to the course of our young people's interest in Judaism, which often intensifies after adolescence—just the period when we leave them high and dry in their ignorance of Judaism.

There is nothing in Jewish traditional law which would militate against such a change. On the contrary, the spirit of the rabbinical precept is that the assumption of the status of bar mitzvah is merely one stage in a progressive course of education. In ancient times, it happens to have been the graduate stage, but that—as we have explained—is because the antecedent training was more intensive. Today, it may well represent a lesser stage, and the intellectual requirement be correspondingly lowered.

Such adaptation of Bar Mitzvah to existent conditions is not unknown. In some parts of the world, for example, it is customary to cut the boy's hair on the occasion of the ceremony. This is merely a Jewish adaptation of the widespread custom of shearing the locks at puberty. Similarly, the very choice of the age of thirteen may have been influenced by the fact that in Imperial Rome youths often attained majority, and first donned the *toga praetexta,* in their thirteenth year; while the Bar Mitzvah feast has its direct counterpart in the Roman *sportulae* presented to a young man on that occasion. In short, what we are advocating is a similar adaptation on the ideological level.

JEWISH tradition wisely leaves the solution of these problems to the discernment of the prophet Elijah at the time when he comes to herald the Messiah. In the present instance, however, the long interval may well prove disastrous, for it may in fact deprive the Messenger of any fully responsible Jews to whom he may convey his tidings.

AND PEOPLE

DAVID IGNATOW

THEY nest in the building cornices
swept by rain and the city's store
of dust. They have picked straw
to bed on from wood cases machinery
is packed in, and for the nest itself
splinters off the cases ripped open.
They peck at manure piles of truck horses
in the neighborhood, and at peanut shells
dropped lunchtime. They hop about
among cars swishing by, and fly
from building to building, crowding
the air; and people in summer
or even winter go by, wistful.

DAVID IGNATOW, whose poetry has appeared in previous issues of COMMENTARY, is the author of several volumes of verse, the most recent of which, *Poems,* was brought out in 1948 by the Decker Press. A new book of his poetry is in preparation.

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INDONESIA SIPS THE WINE OF INDEPENDENCE

A Traveler's Report

PETER SCHMID

DJAKARTA, on the island of Java, is one of the most melancholy capitals of the world. Yes, sigh the Dutch, it was different before the war. But even before disaster overtook the Europeans in Indonesia, Batavia—as it was then called—was, as now, no city in the deeper sense of the word, no integrated community where strengths and weaknesses, vices and virtues, the qualities of labor and leisure—in short, the communal essence—are powerfully and visibly focused and magnified. It was a city without form, a congeries of clean, snug modern dwellings, individually excellent to be sure, and each testifying to a fussy—and, by now, vanished—ideal of comfort, but thrown together as if by a boy playing with building blocks. The lack of a center suggests a city architect suffering from schizophrenia. There is, for instance, no business district, but only shops strewn without rhyme or reason over the whole city. Even so simple an element of architectural form as a sidewalk has incomprehensibly been omitted. You step out of the Hôtel des Indes and find yourself at once in the street, menaced by wildly careening automobiles. Did the European masters consider that walking was beneath their dignity, and that pedestrians, suspect and inferior beings, were not entitled to even the most elementary rights of the roadway? Whatever the answer, the fact is that Djakarta is one of the cities most dangerous to life in the East.

But perhaps I am doing the city builders an injustice. The Dutch are not landlubbers but sea creatures, and if Djakarta (standing some miles inland from the sea) has anything that can be called a main street it is the canal that extends through the city and connects it with the coast. By way of this canal, ships used to bring wares in from the artificial harbor on the coast, putting in at the innumerable flights of steps which descend from the street to the canal's edge; and the waste waters of the capital city flowed into this earthen-yellow flood and were carried off to sea.

No longer do ships nestle at the feet of the staircases; they have long since been crowded out by the more convenient motor trucks. Now women carry their laundry baskets to the turbid water, and they beat, soap, and press the family wash on the steps. And they also plunge themselves into the water. No need of bathing suits here: the sarong is as much benefited by a dousing as the body. So the tight-fitting blouses are removed and the parti-colored cloths which envelop the hips are slipped up over the breasts. The muddy water swallows up bodies along with their garments, and no prudish eye is offended, no prurient one gratified, when the women, under cover of the opaque surface, remove the last stitch of clothing and vigorously rub their submerged bottoms. Meanwhile naked boys splash about laughing and screaming among their grown-up sisters; or they swing each other over the bluff and in the passion of play take no heed of the metropolitan traffic that roars past them.

The hygienic aspect is even worse than one would suppose: many take their toothbrushes along and dip them in the broth

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INDEPENDENCE is not enough: when an Asian country at last throws off its colonial masters, then its problems, both for itself and the rest of the world, are just beginning—that would seem to be the conclusion to be drawn from this personal account of a recent trip to Indonesia, which throws considerable light on the attitude to the West and the whites, not only of the former Dutch colony, but of revolutionary Asia generally. PETER SCHMID, at present a globe-trotting correspondent for *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich), *Der Monat* (Berlin), and *Die Neue Zeitung* (Munich), is the author of a volume on the German dramatist Georg Büchner (1940) and will shortly publish a book on modern Japan. As writer and photographer, he has contributed widely to European periodicals, and is a former editor of *Die Weltwoche*. His present article has been translated from the German by Felix Giovanelli.

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while to the left someone washes a swaddling clout and to the right—a squatting figure eases itself. For all the whites, especially for the cleanliness-mad Dutch, this combination bath, washtub, drinking glass, and sewer has become a symbol of the decadence of Indonesia since its liberation.

So long as there was a Master Race in Indonesia, things were different. Even the Japanese, who wooed so ardently in behalf of "Asiatic brotherhood," were likely, when coming upon someone at the canal in a suspicious posture, to help him into the water with a kick. No, those austere Japanese "brothers" were not at all beloved. Although their propaganda of hatred against the whites was readily accepted, their attitude toward Malayan "softness" was alien and burdensome. To the Indonesians, "freedom" meant a world without commands, without kicks, without drudgery; it meant that the coolies were to have the armchairs and fine automobiles; it meant a world where everything was permissible.

IT TAKES less than a day to sense an atmosphere here quite different from the Latin-Oriental nonchalance of French Indo-China or the hierarchical social discipline of India. Gone is the old cringing humility before the "Sahib" or the "Master." The elevator boys in the hotel laugh in your face with deliberate impudence. These hotel boys are pleasant to look at, with tender beautiful faces and unruly black hair scarcely held in place by their tight batik turbans. The one thing wrong with them is that they behave as if they were the guests; no waiters in the world push your plate so contemptuously at you. "Why don't you train your help better?" I asked the hotel manager. He made a grimace of despair: "Are you crazy? If I say a single word, the whole staff will be on strike. Take a good look!" He pointed to a shabby delivery man with a basket strapped to his hips unconcernedly pushing his way through a throng of guests in the lobby, lingering insolently at the desk, chattering with the clerks. "They used to come in by the rear door modestly and decently, but now they're the boss."

This Hotel Royal was one of the unhappiest places I had ever seen: a collection of disillusioned souls, from the hotelkeeper down to the last guest. The owner was one of those hearty Swiss of the old school, of the kind that become famous the world over in the exercise of their national calling. It had been his hard luck to seek a future in Indonesia; elsewhere he would now be spending a mellow old age. Before the war things had been different for him also. At that time he owned a handsome hotel in Magelang, in Central Java. Then came war, the Japanese occupation, evacuation, the return, a new war—of the Dutch against the rebels, and the offensive against the Central Javanese Republic. As the army approached Magelang, the Republicans set fire to all the hotels and his lifework was destroyed. The Swiss government tried to protect the interest of its nationals. Beg your pardon, said the Indonesian regime, the Dutch broadened the scope of this war—the destruction resulting from it is not our responsibility. Beg your pardon, said the Dutch, obviously we are not answerable for the vandalism of our enemies. So the old man took over a down-at-the-heels enterprise in the capital city, and his face was etched with bitter resentment against a world so unbearably changed.

At that I was lucky to find a place. I have the habit of neglecting the elementary precaution of reserving a room, but always trust to my good luck, which has failed me only once, in Santiago, where I was condemned to spend the night in an open field. Something like this almost happened to me in Djakarta. Arriving on the ship from Singapore, I first tried the Hôtel des Indes and was then turned down at one overcrowded place after another, until finally my compatriot of the Hotel Royal took pity on me. For Djakarta is unbelievably crowded. The young Republic has set up its headquarters here and given suck to a vast litter of jobholders. At the same time those Dutch who want to leave Indonesia keep streaming in from various points and fill the hotels to overflowing. It is a heart-rending sight, this waiting army with nothing in prospect except a return to a home-country which has long since ceased to be theirs. The Dutch who went out to the colonies outgrew in short order the limitations of their tiny native land, and now they shudder at the prospect of returning. They have been cheated of their years of service—who cares about a veteran colonial official?—and cheated of their savings.

I met a young man who had been studying

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engineering in Holland but had run out of money and accepted a position in the colonial government of Timor. "There are few Europeans, few pleasures, and few temptations there," he said to me. "In three years I managed to save up ten thousand gulden. But before I could get back to resume my studies, the surprises began to rain down. First came the currency reform. As you know, the Indonesian rebels issued bank notes in the region they occupied. This currency was proclaimed to be equivalent to the old Dutch-Indian money. The result was a flood of paper notes and a consequent currency reform which quite simply halved the value of all savings accounts and bank notes on hand. So my ten thousand gulden became five thousand. Then all money remittances to Holland were subjected to a 66 per cent discount, to be credited to the Indonesian state. Figure out for yourself how much I have left."

This young man has given up the dream of a career in Holland and has chosen to go to New Zealand as the new country of his adoption. And he is not the only one; young Dutchmen are emigrating by the thousands to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, because, besides feeling themselves an alien element in their own country, they have to fear the prospect of unemployment.

THERE is hardly a more despondent bunch of white men than the Dutch of Indonesia. In my hotel, which was mainly a headquarters for demobilized military men, the officers would sit every evening on the balconies fronting their rooms and try to conjure away their fate in the oblivion of drink. But this was not so easy, for their pay no longer enabled them to buy the necessary quantities of gin. When, finally, the ships to take them home came in, the commissioned officers made a point of carrying their own luggage in order not to risk what happened to one of them during my stay: finding, aboard ship, his luggage filled with stones.

But those who still intend to pursue their careers in Indonesia are no less despondent. The ground is giving way at their feet. Hopes of understanding and cooperation between the whites and their erstwhile subjects have dwindled before a steadily increasing anti-Dutch propaganda. Many believe every dreadful rumor. Enlightened and intelligent persons assured me that the peasants up in the mountains, stirred up by agitators, are preparing to drive all the whites into the sea with pointed bamboo sticks. I do not know what to make of this tale; the mood of the country makes it easy to believe in all kinds of horrors.

When I arrived in Surabaya and stepped out for a walk, a hotel employee ran after me and said: "Don't let your fountain pen clip show, and if you plan to go to a movie I recommend that you leave your brief case with us. They might snip your wrist watch off too." I laughed at him: "I'm not such a child that I can be robbed so easily." "Oh," he warned, "even the strongest are helpless. Four bums will crowd about you so you can't move an inch and a fifth will pick anything he pleases from your pockets, like oranges from a tree." I had to be shown. I kept the clip of my fountain pen on display. The pen was a pitiful piece of Japanese junk which had already cost me a fortune in ruined shirts and trousers. Some thief could steal it to his ruination for all I cared! I had not walked a hundred steps when a young fellow who had been loitering at the side of the street made a lightning grab at my breast pocket, and the pen was gone. I twisted the thief's wrist and forced him to drop the pen. "Well, shall I call a policeman?" I said, trying to shake his unrepentant impudence. But I speedily gave up all thought of the police. There wasn't a policeman in sight, and several young men appeared on the scene looking as if they were about to fall upon me. So I let go and went my way. "That was very smart of you," said the hotel porter after I had told him my adventure. "As a white man, you are in the wrong from the beginning, and you haven't a chance when the crowd gets nasty."

Indeed, one feels hostility in the air. One may mistrust such sensations, laugh them off as manifestations of subjective insecurity. But there is an expression about the faces of the passers-by that is unmistakable—it is the look a butcher directs at a calf slowly being prepared for the slaughter, a calculating look which says, "One week, perhaps two . . . that will be about it."

I have asked myself innumerable times why hatred against the whites continues to flame so inextinguishably high, now that the struggle for freedom and independence has been concluded. Why is the situation so ut-

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terly different from that of India where the English in their capacity as masters were thrown out the front door and readmitted as friends by the rear one and offered a place at table? Why is it so different from Indo-China, where even in the midst of the bloody hostilities a secret mutual sympathy hovers over the battle?

THIS question I put to Soetan Sjahrir, one of the architects of Indonesian independence and prime minister of the Republic during the decisive years following 1945. In January of 1947, Sjahrir was compelled to resign because of his mild policy toward the Dutch and he no longer plays a political role in public, but his influence is undiminished behind the scenes.

I had to wait for some time in his home and I passed the time scanning the titles of the books that lined the walls of his study. They reflected a range of reading probably unique in Indonesia. Among the Germans, the old big names were notably represented, especially Goethe and Nietzsche, while among the French were Camus and the Existentialists, and in English, historical and sociological works were in prominence. Here, I said to myself, is the study of a man who has risen above the squabbles of nationalism and is capable of dispensing impartial justice. At this point Sjahrir entered—a jovial, ironical, pleasant man, who has tried in vain to combat a tendency to corpulence by dancing and tennis. From the very first moments, the conversation took a confidential turn, as though between old friends.

"What have the Dutch to offer us?" he asked, meeting my question squarely. "That nation of petty bourgeois and colonial traders possesses none of the greatness which gave validity to the claims of the French and English as standard-bearers of civilized values. Not even in their own country: when I was a student in Leyden, the books I read were all German; now, I read English by preference. The Dutch came here to exploit our land. They weren't bad colonizers—in fact, perhaps better than the rest from a materialist viewpoint. But they brought no culture, no sense of form, only hospitals, roads, streets, plantations, only the things they themselves needed for their own comfort and security, nothing else: not the spirit of fair play and impartial justice which permeated the Hindu elite via the English public school, not the French art of living which has left its stamp on the humblest Annamite."

And so today the Indonesians turn away from the Dutch, whose help they need so badly.

As J. S. Furnivall puts it in his prophetic book on the Dutch East Indies, the fundamental error of the Dutch was to neglect the task of educating the Indonesians for home rule. The Dutch were like a mother scolding her growing child at each movement: "No, you little idiot, not that way. . . . Look, this is how you do it. . . . Mercy, you did it wrong again. . . . Oh well, hand it over, mother will do it herself." Things got to the point where an Indonesian could hardly scratch his head without first asking the Dutch whether that too was improper. It is not surprising, then, that the whole colonial government, down to the pettiest officer, was staffed with Dutchmen, and that the people, with the exception of an ever dwindling caste layer to whom European higher education was made available, sank ever more deeply into ignorance and apathy, so much so as to become like a herd of cows, with plump udders, housed in elegant stalls, but not constituting a People, an Oriental *Thou* with which a European *I* could meet on equal terms. In a strictly commercial undertaking there is no room for things of the spirit. Many Indonesians attribute this neglectful policy to ill will on the part of the Dutch. I do not believe this to be true, though I met many embittered types among the erstwhile masters of the country, who deplore even the smattering of education granted to a small native elite—a rebellious elite, as it turned out. The fact is, as Sjahrir pointed out, that the failure of Dutch leadership had its deeper source in the formlessness of Dutch culture.

BUT even if it was in fact ill will that was at work, that too rested on stupidity and self-delusion. The liberation of colonial peoples is inevitable, and it is better to devote one's mental energies to meeting the inevitable than to try to avert it. The French too are struggling against destiny. But they are doing it with some of the madness and boldness of the gambler who knows how to take ruin as the will of fate and to go down in style. People are killing each other in Indo-China without hatred deep down, perhaps,

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even, with a secret love in their hearts. On the other hand, the Dutch have not reconciled themselves to their loss. They are furious, with a fury directed at the whole world. At the English who, after the Japanese capitulation in Malaya, landed the Allied Dutch troops at home rather than in their colonial empire. At the Americans who blocked Dutch attempts at a decisive military solution by the appeal to the United Nations. Above all, naturally, at the Indonesians who are so radically unprepared for self-rule. There are some among the Dutch in Malaya who are aware of their shortcomings and honorably seek a new beginning, though they really know it is too late. But there are others who do not conceal a malicious joy over the spectacle of Indonesian decadence, and these do not contribute to clearing the poisoned air. But cooperation has become a matter of life and death for both sides.

Seeking eternal dominance, the Dutch were not only unable to avert revolution, but stored up a worse disaster for themselves than overtook the English with India's defection. Indonesia is an amorphous mass of human destinies needing to be formed, but destitute of any pattern-shaping spirit. Little or nothing remains of the great culture which in past centuries ennobled these islands. Even Islam, which continues to prove itself a powerful social agent, has been diluted to tropical indolence. Every hole-and-corner town in the Middle East huddles about a proud minaret, and the minds of its inhabitants are, as it were, incessantly fixed on heaven. In the villages of Indonesia the mosque is a dirty out-of-the-way assembly room with neither exterior nor spiritual dignity. God lives here in the lumber-room and his worship is permeated with animistic practices. For the peasant, perhaps, this lack of elevation in his relation to God is not particularly tragic. He has his soil, his oxen, his gaily painted cart, his rice field; and his village has a complex sense of community, of work in common, which in many localities issues in a centuries-old type of primitive collectivism. But in the cities and on the higher social levels, all is emptiness and confusion.

"There isn't another people on earth," Sjahrir said, "that could be more easily governed than ours. All the caste complications that have weighed upon the Asiatic empires, the class struggle between rulers and masses, the internal conflicts in the ruling classes themselves, all that is absent from our leveled society. But from this obedient mass, only here and there does someone stand out who knows the meaning of leadership: he is generally a descendant of one of those old princely families whose instincts have survived systematic discouragement on the part of the Dutch. They amount to a mere handful of sons of officials, of whom our President Soekarno is one. This is the only material from which a political leadership can be fashioned."

INDONESIA is a land without an elite: that is the basic plight of this country. I am not speaking of the lack of physicians, engineers, and so forth, though the contribution of Western specialists in the professions is a matter of absolute necessity, but rather of the lack of intellectually fertile political personalities such as the Hindus had in Gandhi. To be sure, efforts are being made to forge an ideology which could serve as a foundation for the new state. Contemporary politicians lose no opportunity in their speeches to quote from the *Pantja-Sila*, an inexhaustible source of beautiful phrases such as Divine Omnipotence, Humanity, Indonesian Unity, and Democracy. But these fetish-phrases do not conceal Indonesia's political nakedness. In his struggle for freedom Gandhi gave the Hindus a new *mystique*. When the peasants of India chose the way of passive resistance against the British rulers, they knew that the meaning of freedom does not stop with liberation, that the new ideals held up by their leaders were not a door opening on utopia, but implied painful struggle and a deep sense of dedication. Gandhi was more than a disaffected subject, he was the prophet of a new, and at the same time old, dispensation. For India it was to be quite as much a struggle for faith as for liberation. Indonesia's leaders have unmistakably drawn their inspiration from Gandhi, but it remains mired at the level of parody, making all the more painfully evident the distance between the two levels. Where Indian leaders spoke in terms of a return to the national being, the Indonesian intellectual malcontents promised all the attractions of Western pleasure. Where, in India, a way of self-renunciation was to lead to the center of the self, here the coolies were encouraged to run after the

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mirage of the fantastic and unattainable. Just as a single drop of some reagent can transform the color and molecular structure of whole vats of certain liquids, so has one of the most self-sustaining, placid peoples in the world been translated, at one stroke, into the restlessness of an all-pervasive hunger. And since this hunger can never be appeased but must grow apace with the progressive breakdown of governmental functioning, an ever-growing fury is directed against the whites, predestined scapegoats in the imperfect Oriental world.

An example: In Indonesia, as in all Oriental countries, the combination bicycle-ricksha is used by those who are in a hurry or who want to move about in comfort. Everywhere this vehicle bears a different name and very often it possesses some of the specific character of the country of its adoption. In Americanized Bangkok it is called trisha; these vehicles are brightened by gay lanterns and glide by night through the streets like a moving galaxy. In Saigon the jinrikisha has something of the antediluvian character of a Parisian taxi and the only elegant touch the wheelers permit themselves is the neat tropical helmet they wear by day, which is painted in oils of every hue and gives an effect so dazzling as sometimes to suggest pure gold. But most striking of all is undoubtedly the petsha of Djakarta. It is a stunning vehicle in yellow lacquer, with red leather seats, decorated all over with oil paintings—flowers, birds, landscapes—and each is graced with a name of its own which reflects the poetic disposition of its Chinese lessor. Some are especially distinguished by innumerable feather bouquets—like feather dusters—which project from all sides of the vehicle like the gargoyles of a Gothic cathedral. One must imagine on the bicycle saddle a young man of forbidding mien with a tiny rakish straw hat cocked over his head, and in the back, surrounded by stiff chicken feathers (resembling a palm grove), a whole family, husband, wife, and children, squeezed in like sardines. Such sights are multiplied a thousandfold in this bustling city.

The earnings of the driver are anything but paltry. He has to pay the Chinese owner a daily rental fee of six rupees, but if he is a hustler, he can earn twenty. Nevertheless, the Indonesian regime took offense at the existence of these petshas. What!—was a citizen of this free, proud Indonesian nation to wheel his compatriots about by his own bodily exertions—and this in exchange for a paltry pecuniary consideration? No, such a situation was no longer bearable. One of the first measures taken by the new regime was to order thirty thousand motor-driven petshas from abroad. On the arrival of the first of these vehicles, the President celebrated the occasion in person, posing with his entire family for a photograph (his favorite activity). These automotive petshas are intended to displace the cyclers altogether and thereby help preserve the dignity of the Indonesian state. But there is a slight catch: of about one hundred thousand petsha boys, seventy thousand are faced with unemployment. That makes a considerable number of fresh malcontents, to say nothing of the riding public which in the future will have to pay more and wait longer for its transportation.

Now, all this would be of no importance, but in view of the state of public finances, it is an utterly absurd development. All the public clocks of Djakarta have long since ceased to run, either because nobody bestirs himself, or because repair parts are lacking. The water supply system has been in complete disrepair since the Japanese capitulation. The water supply dries up during the day, and is contaminated with epidemic viruses which are a standing danger to the health of the population. To set this right, there is no money on hand, and it would seem that here the dignity of the Indonesian state is not felt to be at stake. But down with the petshas!

Among the more pleasing institutions of new Indonesia are the information bureaus, where the tourist finds a kind of assistance in word and act that I have experienced elsewhere only in Communist Budapest and among the Israelis of Tel Aviv. Want to speak to a cabinet minister? Just a moment, please! An appointment is swiftly arranged by telephone, and if—as invariably happens—the minister is not there at the appointed time, that is certainly not the fault of the information bureau.

At the information bureau in Surabaya I announced my wish to climb Mt. Bromo—I could not bear the thought of leaving without having peered down the crater of one of those volcanoes which run along Java's

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northern coast like beads on a string. I feared that I was asking something impossible, for the government has been very concerned for the safety of foreign journalists, and the thieving rabble which makes this beautiful isle so unsafe likes to hide out in the mountain recesses. But my suggestion was greeted with open enthusiasm. The head of the information bureau offered to accompany me personally in an official car. When it turned out that the comfortable limousine was needed elsewhere, I was offered the use of a small truck. My disappointment at the change was mitigated by a switch in traveling companions: as protection against the dangers of the excursion, the chief offered me his secretary, a girl whom we shall call, for brevity's sake, Delly.

If I say that Delly was an old fighter in the Indonesian independence movement, the adjective "old" must not be taken as indicative of her age or her appearance. Delly could have been a very attractive young woman. She had the wild curly hair of the people of Timor and that hint of wildness in her face which marks off the Polynesians of the eastern island world from the mellower but more indolent Malayans. But behind the liveliness of her conversation, her beautiful features seemed hardened into a certain rigidity which I at first took to be pride, but was actually a manifestation of that sense of inferiority which, in the colored peoples, is often inverted into a kind of convulsive self-assertion.

I had imagined Mt. Bromo as a kind of Etna or Fujiyama, from whose slopes an endless vista of plain, sea, and sky would be disclosed to the climber. I kept waiting for the moment when the road would finally end and empty space would yawn at our feet. But that moment never came. The road climbed almost imperceptibly toward those peaks, the texture of whose rugged sides still recalled the choleric temperament of the flowing lava. Emerging from tropical luxuriance we began to skirt the slopes of a valley whose vegetation changed under one's eye. The rice fields and green plumy leaves of the banana trees sank beneath us, and a familiar, almost Western panorama of vegetable gardens began to widen over the terraced slopes.

As with plants, human faces gradually changed in character. Laughing and shrewd peasant eyes, the sight of which gladdened one's heart, replaced the soft melancholy of the valley people. Nobody had disturbed these mountain dwellers in their remoteness. A young man whom we picked up on the dusty way told me he was a Buddhist. All the people up here were Buddhist; there had been not the slightest admixture with the Mohammedanism of the plain. Of course, this young man knew little of the deeper sayings of Buddha; he had to accommodate himself to a much more elemental and powerful God. I should come back several weeks later, he advised me, for the great sacrificial ceremony when the entire population would climb up to the crater to make its offering to the volcano. Formerly it used to be a virgin who was plunged down the volcano's throat; there were older people of the locality still living who could recall this barbarous practice. Now, only goats are sacrificed and Bromo has raised no known objection to the substitution.

A SURPRISE awaited us in the village: there was no hotel. The war had raged here also. The partisans had taken refuge from the hotly pursuing Dutch in the volcanic fastness, and when Dutch troops were sighted, they set fire to the hotel, as was their custom, so that it could not be used for a headquarters. Had I ventured this way by myself, the situation would have been difficult. But Delly had spent some of her partisan days up here. The people greeted her as an old acquaintance, and we found lodging at the house of the community elder, who forthwith killed two hens and had a rice dish served up which would have been enough to stuff two regiments. Outside, the children of the village stood watching us, noses flat against the panes.

In the evening as we sat alone in the dimly lit living room, Delly told me her story. Her father had been one of the few native-born officials of the Dutch government, a Christian who had seen to it that his children should be brought up in a thoroughly Christian way. Delly attended a normal school and learned English and German; she spent a vacation, with her father, in Holland, where she successfully vaulted all racial barriers. But things had not gone well with her. The closing by the Japanese of the school where she taught came to her as more of a liberation than a cause for anxiety. It pointed the way to her destiny, which she sought in

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the Resistance movement. She had been through everything, in defeat and victory, and now. . . . I sensed that her wild dynamism was cramped by the official position she now occupied.

She spoke in massive, unshaded catchwords, which tumbled in an oppressive and almost comical way from her lips. Every fifth word was "progress," every tenth word "struggle." Yes, she said, the struggle must go on for the "good of the people"; and she saw "unremitting struggle" as a law of her being. Struggle against whom, against what? Against foreign capital which was still throttling the economy of her country, against American "imperialism" which was offering its outstretched hand so deceitfully.

"What!" I asked, horrified by all those phrases. "Are you a Communist?"

Delly looked at me in amazement. "What makes you think that?" she said with genuine innocence.

"What the devil!" I heard myself saying. "Don't you know what Communism is, have you never read about it?"

Oh yes, she had read about Communism, but that was all propaganda, not to be believed for a moment. Her greatest wish was to go to Moscow or Peking in order to see for herself what Communism really was. "I am convinced," I said, "that you will like it. Do you want to know why? Because you—and, for that matter, all the young intellectuals I have met in this country—think exactly the way Communists want you to think: with a confused idealism, with an epileptic emphasis on the 'welfare of the people,' with shrill cries for solutions that must be as resounding, as aggressive as possible. Don't you know that everything worthy to live and endure must grow slowly, like a tree? And that we should not be so ready to destroy an opponent for evils which do not flow from his hostility but from a twofold unripeness—our own and that of the situation?"

I KNEW that I was taking a risk, so to speak, because Orientals regard direct speech as taboo and are easily moved to take offense. Delly became silent, and the vertical crease in her forehead, which lent her an appearance of unwomanly fanaticism, deepened into a network of hard furrows. Finally she said, "It's strange, what you say. My younger sister is in fact a Communist. She was married to one of the leading Communists in Java. After the Madiun uprising—do you know of that mad attempt of a handful of people to seize power by a coup?—he was sentenced to death. She too was sentenced to death, but she was pregnant, and by the time she had been delivered the amnesty was proclaimed, and so her life was saved. Now she lives quietly, apparently removed from all political activity, in a little country town." She laughed. "Obviously, it runs in the family!"

"Perhaps," I answered. "But even so I would attribute it more to your education than to inheritance. For, fundamentally, you Oriental intellectuals are all alike. Your intellectual schooling uproots you, removes you from the totality of your people, instead of situating you in your natural place at the head—as happens in Europe with us. In consequence, you become spiritual adventurers, a peculiar medley of idealist-cynics. . . ." Delly was on her feet. "Good night," she said, cutting me short. "I am tired and I want to go to sleep."

She was not telling the truth. Only a partition separated our rooms and I could hear her tossing restlessly on her couch. For I too was a long time falling asleep. I reflected over this rebellious creature who was a Communist without being aware of it. Strange, I thought, how ideologies having no material, no logical, connection, can unconsciously find a like realization. Was not Delly a kind of Saul of Tarsus, waiting to be put on the road to Damascus, one whose instincts had already grasped that revelation which only later would overpower her mind? I could imagine Delly saying fifty years hence: "As I read those lines . . . ." or "When Comrade X thundered out those words . . . ."—yes, in that moment it had come over her—she could feel the scales falling from her eyes—she knew where the truth lay.

It was the altitude also—6,500 feet above sea level—that robbed me of sleep. At hourly intervals I would hear someone in the front room grope his way outside and hit the tree bole that stood before the house, making a dry hammering sound—much like that of the woodpecker. The striking of this bole served as clock, alarm bell, and assembly signal to the community; each time, as in the hourly striking of our cathedral clocks, some particular meaning is conveyed to the community's

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attention. I was to hear this sound often in the course of my journey and to come to love it.

EARLY next morning two horses were pawing the ground in front of our door. Delly was late—she was a woman after all. Finally we swung ourselves into the saddles, and the horses began their brisk climb up the path, which continued to wind upward between truck gardens, offering nothing that could be called a prospect—until quite suddenly, at a bend, the gray desolation of a volcanic crater came into view. I was filled with horror at the sight of that waste out of whose depths came a rumble like the continual falling of great bowling pins. Then came a roll of thunder which turned into a deafening roar, and great balls of smoke shot out into the sky.

A capricious gust of wind descended into the volcano's maw, and the heavy mist that a moment before had veiled its depths crowded upward past the opposite wall of the crater. It was like looking into a shark's mouth, peering past those hundreds of yards of sheer drop, down to a black hole which no eye could penetrate. Black shreds—of God knows what—were violently expelled. They looked like charred newspapers.

"How would you like to be a goat?" I cried out to Delly. "No, thanks!" she laughed.

A change had come over her. Earlier that morning she had seemed more severe than the day before. I had taken this to be a punishment for my over-bluntness. But the ride on horseback had restored the old unconstraint, and whatever there had been of an official distance between us had melted away into comradely familiarity. We sat down on the crater's edge and began to chat as though back in the living room in the village.

"Why, actually, haven't you married?" I asked without preamble. "I love independence," Delly answered, "and besides I can carry on the struggle for my people that much better." I looked at her and laughed: "Please stop talking such nonsense. A girl so pretty, spirited, and clever as you—why do you always talk about nothing but 'struggle'? Leave the struggling to the men, and you do something better." "What would be better?" she asked. "Love. Haven't you ever loved?" "Oh yes, but. . . ." "What kind of men have you loved, whites or Indonesians?" I knew that sounded damnably inquisitive but I felt that I was on the point of solving the riddle. "Dutch," she confessed curtly and fell into silence.

Meanwhile the grumbling below had grown louder. Soon we saw ourselves enfolded in mist, and when the sulphur fumes began to assail our noses we mounted our horses silently, and just as silently picked our way through the volcanic ash to the path which would lead us back to the world of the green and the living.

"Is that why you are so unhappy?" I asked, after a while. She had no trouble relating my question to what had been said before. "Perhaps," she said and then checked herself as if deliberating whether to take further notice of my indiscreet questions. "Why shouldn't I come out with it? Yes. In a deeper sense, even, than you think. It was not a personal disillusionment that led me to take up the struggle against the enemy; quite the contrary, I like the Dutch very much as individuals." She paused and we rode on in silence a while. "Perhaps too much," she murmured as if to herself. "The horrible thing is," she suddenly broke forth, "that they have alienated me from myself, that I have become one of them in my whole being. Oh, you cannot imagine how much my own people are strangers to me! You were asking me whether. . . . No, I have never loved a Javanese; I couldn't stand to be touched by one. Deep down I am Dutch. I think and feel Dutch. But I hate them collectively."

We were nearing the village. Young women strained upward, past our horses, carrying bamboo poles on their backs to fetch water. As we jumped down from our horses before the house of our host, a young man held up toward us two puppies that he had been playing with. Yes, they were for sale, he said in reply to Delly's question. She chose the smaller one, a clumsy white fellow with a black snout.

"What shall I call him?" she asked me.

"Call him Peter," I suggested, "and whenever he barks, he will remind you of me."

"No," she laughed, "I think I'll call him Stalin!"

The truck swayed and bumped down the road even more unpleasantly than the day before. Little Stalin, trembling with fright, hid his black muzzle in the leg of my trousers to keep from seeing or hearing.

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HOW U.S. ANTI-SEMITISM REALLY BEGAN

Its Grass-Roots Source in the 90's

OSCAR HANDLIN

BETWEEN 1913 and 1920, in that portentous period that brought so many other changes to the United States and to the world, anti-Semitism became, for the first time, a significant force in this country. As the years went by leading up to the publication of Henry Ford's version of the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion, great numbers of Americans felt obsessed with fear of the Jew. Ominous hatreds began to take form in economic and social discrimination, and even in political action. Shortly, the Klan would draw for part of its armory upon those hatreds.

The factors that produced anti-Semitism in the 20th century are well known and have been abundantly discussed. Competition for place generated economic discrimination. The movement to restrict immigration gave rise to a chain of arguments in which Jews, like other newcomers, were blamed for pauperism, vice, crime, and every other social evil. The growth of racist thinking allowed men like Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard to foster the Aryan myth. Most important, perhaps, the xenophobia of the war years and after led many Americans to reject everything "foreign."

There was, in addition, another factor which has not been so well evaluated: the disappointment of many radicals and reformers who somehow came to put the blame for their own failure after 1900 on the Jews. The great populist Tom Watson was only the most striking of a number of figures who felt the world was plunging hellward and held the Jews responsible for the descent. And, significantly, the mass of decent folk who joined the Klan and read the *Dearborn Independent* came from areas that had in the 1890's been strongly moved by radicalism.

The doctrinaire insistence that anti-Semitism was a strong constant in the life of America's Jews from the beginnings of their history in this country has obscured the real significance of the developments after 1913. Those who have pounced with pleasure upon every slight slur, upon every instance of exclusion or discrimination, upon every fugitive hostile pamphlet, have usually neglected to qualify their discoveries by recognition of the fact that the prevailing temper of the 19th century was overwhelmingly tolerant. In each case, the slurs were repudiated, the discriminations denounced, and the prejudiced arguments rebutted by a society willing to accept the Jews as desirable and equal participants in an evolving culture. The steady disappearance of political disabilities early in the century and the opening of all sorts of political and social places as the immigrant Jews adjusted to the New World were the signs of that acceptance.

Indeed, philo-Semitism was far more characteristic of the national attitude before 1900 than anti-Semitism. Americans then were horrified by the Dreyfus case; they condemned the pogroms in Russia, the ritual murder charges in Hungary, and the distorted propaganda of the Stöckers and the

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THE common belief is that anti-Semitism is, invariably, an expression of conservatism or "reaction." But evidence to the contrary is impressive; and in the United States particularly, as OSCAR HANDLIN points out, the emergence of ideological anti-Semitism, contrary to general opinion, seems to be connected with the growth of certain forms of "grass-roots" radicalism. Mr. Handlin, associate professor of history at Harvard and a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, is the author of *Boston's Immigrants* (1941), *The Immigrant in American Politics* (1944), and *Commonwealth* (1946). Mr. Handlin was born in 1915 and studied at Brooklyn College and Harvard University.

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Drumonts in Germany and France. After all, in 1899 Tom Watson, later to win unenviable notoriety as a Klansman, writing a history of France, went out of his way vigorously to denounce medieval prejudices against the Jews.

To be sure, the hostile attitudes that developed after 1913 were not inscribed upon a *tabula rasa.* They were overlaid on conceptions of the Jew that had already taken form before the 19th century drew to a close. *The hatred the Klansman bore in his heart was new; but his image of the Jew was not.* An examination of that image in the decade before 1900, before it had become charged with anti-Semitism, will illuminate the whole nature of the problem.

To a certain extent, the American picture of the Jew was based upon real contacts. As the number of Jews in the United States grew steadily through the 19th century, they became familiar figures in every part of the country. From dealings with them emerged a distinct stereotype, the features of which were dictated by the condition of the Jews as immigrants.

Like other immigrants the Jew was a strange and easily recognized character in American society. He could be distinguished from the mass of his fellow citizens physically, in visual or auditory terms. In mid-19th century, there was still a good deal of vagueness about his particular features, however. What seemed then to mark off the Jew most prominently was language and accent. Yet to untutored American ears his sounds were quite like those of the generality of Germans; often he was counted simply a kind of German.

The popular poems of the New England humorist Charles Follen Adams contain the most characteristic expressions of this early image. The central personage of the poems bore the unmistakable name Yawcob Strauss, and he spoke an outlandish dialect which apparently held all the humor. But Yawcob was not recognizably different from any other German. A shopkeeper, he was pictured in a wholly kindly light, sentimental and good-hearted, preoccupied with his beer and his pipe. The same lack of differentiation was evident in such minor characters as Shonny Schwartz, "mit his hair so soft und yellow und his face so blump und mellow."

By the 1890's however, the stereotype was much more clearly delineated. In the comic magazines of the decade it appeared fully drawn in all its lights and shadows. Occupationally, the Jew was more distinctive than ever. He had by then been identified as a peddler, as an old-clothes dealer, and as a pawnbroker; indeed the three-ball sign and the title "uncle" were synonymous with him. Distinctive names also set him off; Isaacs or Cohen, Ikey, Jake, or Abie. His appearance was familiar too, pack on back, or holding a basket, or pushing a cart. His garments were either old and shiny with an inevitable black derby hat, or else they were ludicrously new and flashy. His hooked nose stood prominently forth from his bearded face and his accent was thick. Finally, he was invariably concerned with money; the words put into his mouth dealt always with finance and reflected a stingy, grasping temperament. Some Jews were just on the edge of dishonesty, like the Bowery shysters Katch and Pinch. But even the likable Old Isaacs of the Bowery, in the popular play, tells his daughter, "Vhy, I vould trust you mit my life, Rachel. But vid mein money, ach, dot vas different."

By the end of the century the stereotype was clear. Repeated in popular novels, in the press, on the dramatic and vaudeville stage, it made Americans acquainted with a distinctive pattern of physical features, clothing, forms of expression, and language associated with the Jews. Most important, it ascribed to that figure a pervasive concern with money.

These caricatures in the perspective of their later uses have the appearance of anti-Semitic insults. But there is evidence that they were not meant and not taken as such. In the first place, no such intent was involved. A public school teacher in New York could affectionately give *Oliver Twist* to a little Jewish boy as a reward. And as late as 1913, Booth Tarkington would un-

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reflectively but without derogatory intent describe in like terms his character Maurice Levy in the popular Penrod stories.

HERE was the critical departure from the Shylock image; the American stereotype involved no hostility, no negative judgment. In a popular story, repeatedly reprinted throughout the century, Moloch, a moneylender thirsty for revenge, plots to compel a duke's son to marry his niece. The duke's response is not anger, but compassion. In the denouement, he declaims:

"'Take her, my son, and wear her close to thy heart, for she is a jewel worthy of thy high position. . . . Moloch, where is now thy revenge!'

"'Thou hast conquered it, my noble Duke,' answered Moloch overcome with surprise and admiration."

And everyone lived happily ever after. Indeed, a "Jew detective" with "the stamp of his race indelibly traced on the features of all his blood" could, in another romance, win the beautiful Anglo-Saxon heroine, who in assenting declares, "To you I now turn for happiness in life, for your people shall be my people, your creed my creed, and your God my God."

The stereotype of the Jew is more comprehensible when we recall that it was, in the 1890's, only one among many. The notion that physical appearance was a sign of national identity was so widely held that a dime novel could speak as a matter of course of the New York detective who disguised himself as an Englishman. In the comic magazines the Jew was joined by the drunken, shiftless Irishman, by the sinister Catholic priest, the gaudy or ragged Negro, the stupid, soggy German, and by the avaricious Yankees Mandy and Aminadab. Identified in outward aspects and in dialect as decisively as the Jew, these were intended to be as funny as, and no more hostile than, the Mr. Dooley of the same period. Significantly, the Jews themselves accepted the caricature; *Der Yiddischer Puck,* a comic magazine edited and published by the well-known journalist N. M. Schaikewitz, often sketched the very same picture of the Jew as its English counterparts. In neither case did the picture reflect a deprecatory attitude.

HOWEVER, in the 1890's an additional element had begun to take a place in the American picture of the Jew. The conception of Jewish interest in money deepened into the conviction that Jews controlled the great fortunes of the world. Although the Jews are still sometimes miserly Shylocks, more often they are princes wielding power through their gold.

In part the newer image was a shadow cast by the prominence of certain Jewish banking houses in Europe. If there were any who had not already heard of the Rothschilds and of Lazard Frères, they had now only to pick up an English edition of Drumont's *La France juive,* published in the United States, to become familiar with long lists of such names — even if they chose not to accept the book's general anti-Semitic propositions. Articles in popular magazines devoted considerable space to Jewish millionaires. The exotic figure of Disraeli, "the Empire-making Jew," seemed large in significance; and travelers in England, like James Russell Lowell, were quite ready from what they saw to believe Jews were coming to control the whole world.

By a variety of means the notion of limitless Jewish wealth acquired wide currency. Already in Henry Adams's anonymous novel of 1880 there appeared the opulent Hartbeest Schneidekoupon, "descended from all the kings of Israel and . . . prouder than Solomon in his glory." In dime novels the fabulously wealthy Jew was a stock character, and so commonplace was this notion of Jewish riches that in the midst of depression in 1894, a magazine seriously suggested that the unemployed of the whole country could be relieved if only "the trustees of the magnificent fund that Baron Hirsch entrusted to a band of Wall Street bankers" would "loosen the cords about . . . [their] money bags."

The wealth of the Jews was ascribed to the fact that they were "a parasitical race

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who, producing nothing, fasten on the produce of land and labor and live on it, shoving the breath of life out of commerce and industry as sure as the creeper throttles the tree that upholds it." Like the American Jew in a serialized novel who stayed at his telephone speculating while the world was threatened with destruction, these people were credited with the capacity for profiting from every contingency.

But again, such judgments were not intrinsically hostile. So a tract that warned "you should not be prejudiced against any race" went on to point out the Jews were naturally money changers through no fault of their own, but simply "on account of their excessive shrewdness." There were even laudatory accounts, praising the Jews' ability to make money. One book in defense of the Jews boasted, "In finance the Jew has for four hundred years been the factor that supplied the nations of the earth with money. The financial system of the world, its inventions and perfection, we owe to the Rothschilds." A little later, a compilation published by the American Hebrew Publishing Company casually remarked, "Of all the nations which the world has known, the commercial instinct is strongest and most fully developed in the Jew. He never sacrifices future opportunity for present gain." If an occasional commentator did point out that the great American bankers were Christians, that only seemed to stress the indirect international connections of the Jews.

To some extent, the lines of socialist thinking, increasingly prevalent in the United States, that connected capitalism with the Jews, strengthened these conceptions. So, the foremost exponent in this country of revisionist socialism in a widely read volume pointed out: "Our era may be called the *Jewish Age*. The Jews have indeed had a remarkable influence on our civilization. Long ago they infused in our race the idea of one God, and now they have made our whole race worship a new true God: the Golden Calf . . . 'Jewism,' to our mind, best expresses that special curse of our age, *Speculation*."

Even more important, the growing preoccupation of many Americans with the money question fixed the tie between Jews and finance. In a period of falling prices, disaster was close at hand for great numbers of farmers who, despite mounting production, saw their situation deteriorate steadily, particularly after the depression of 1893. The temptation was well-nigh irresistible to seek a solution in terms of monetary reform. There were still some calls for greenbacks, but increasingly those who agitated for a change in the currency demanded bimetallism—the free coinage of silver in some established relationship with gold.

In the 1890's these wishes met with an uninterrupted succession of defeats. The rate of silver coinage was not expanded but contracted. President Cleveland's arrangement with J. P. Morgan strengthened the hold of gold and the election of 1896 confirmed the trend. What was more, silver in that decade was abandoned by almost every other country that still used it: Tunis in 1891, Austria-Hungary in 1892, China in 1896, Japan and Russia in 1897.

Frustrated, the reformers acquired a sense of religious intensity about their cause; their speeches became profuse with Christian images. Unable to see any flaw in the rationality of their arguments, they could explain their defeats only by the intervention of some external power. The blame was not in themselves, nor in the people in whom they had faith; it must be outside, in England, among the international bankers, or—with growing frequency—among the Jews.

The prominence of G. Montefiore-Levi and Alfred de Rothschild in the Brussels International Monetary Conference gave the silver men one ground for their suspicion; the activity of Perry Belmont among the gold Democrats gave them another. But they hardly needed evidence. By 1894 the famous *Coin's Financial School* included a map entitled, "The English Octopus. It Feeds on Nothing but Gold." Where England belonged was the simple inscription,

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"Rothschild." In a novel, William Harvey traced the monetary difficulties of the whole world to a plot by "Baron Rothe" to demonetize silver for the sake of English world mastery. In 1895 a silver tract noted as a fact that the Rothschilds owned "one-half the gold in the world, available for use as money, and their aids and satellites own nearly all the remainder."

At the Democratic national convention the very next year Bryan ascended to his blood-stirring peroration, "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." As to what must have then been in the thoughts of his delirious audience, we may guess from the reasons advanced by the silver men in the next few years to explain their defeat. They had been beaten, they explained, by the power of an "invisible empire," an "oligarchy" centered in the "mysterious money power" which had bound "the hands of the United States" and had then "proceeded . . . with marvelous rapidity to enslave the human race." Although there was a vagueness in identifying the members of the oligarchy, the Rothschilds are often mentioned, and occasionally Shylock openly reveals himself. Thus, one of the reformers, J. C. Redpath, has Shylock confess his fear of the radicals, and has him point out that the "insurgents will presently turn upon me and my tribe and destroy our business. I must keep my influence with these contemptible Christian nations, else they will cease to support me and my enterprises. My business is to live by the labor of others." The use of such terms was perhaps figurative to begin with, but they certainly received a more literal reading as time went on.

THE radicals' suspicions of the designs of the financial oligarchy gained strength from the sense of mystery within which Americans had long enveloped the Jew. The elements of the conviction in the United States that there was a strangeness about the Jew were quite different from those making up the demoniac character of the Jew which had persisted into 19th-century Europe from medieval times. The emphasis in this country was upon interpretations of the mission of Israel, which went back at least two hundred years to the reflections of Cotton Mather on the subject.

The visible evidence of mystery was the persistence of Jewry itself. Wonderful in their past achievements, the Jews were "still more wonderful in their preservation." Scattered among the nations, they held to their identity. As with the gulf stream, endless movement did not alter their essential quality; found throughout the world, they were everywhere alien.

The strangeness discernible in Jewish ritual and belief might extend to many unknown realms. The rabbi initiate in the lore of Cabala might possess the power of divination. By the same token the detective with a Jewish name might uncover a murderer with the aid of "second sight." All sort of practices, suggested or actual, might have hidden significance. "The Jewish people don't believe in taking life," testified a social worker, "so to all sorts of vermin they use a whisk brush and out it goes out of the window." The functionings of their institutions were likewise obscure. The *Century Magazine* exposed the practices of the "Kahal" through which Jews "have always succeeded in driving alien elements from the towns . . . where they have settled to get into their hands the capital and immovable property of those places."

There was a purpose to the survival of the group and to the persistence of these differences—so went speculation and assertion. In one sense, the Jew retained his identity to serve as the eternal witness of the truth of Christianity. To one Christian advocate of the Jewish return to Palestine, these people were "Jehovah's ever present answer to the innuendoes against the absolute credibility of the Inspiration of the Old Testament."

But there was a larger purpose still, one involved in the whole Christian conception of salvation. For it was in the whole scheme of things that the mass conversion of the Jews would herald the second coming. While practical efforts to induce Jews in the United States to change their religion seem

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to have fallen off in this period, their Christian fellow citizens were still eager to read about such conversions and looked forward with anticipation to ultimate total success. The Reverend Joseph Ingraham dedicated three of his immensely popular novels to "the daughters of Israel," to the "men of Israel," and to all "American Hebrews" in the hope they would see the light.

In a more rationalistic form, the mission of the Jews was sometimes described as the task of disseminating among all mankind their own peculiar cosmopolitan spirituality and sense of ethics. But that still left a distinctive purpose to their strangeness. If Americans then continued avidly to read Sue's *Wandering Jew,* it was in part at least owing to the fascination of its very title.

The vogue of popular novels with a Biblical setting added to the atmosphere of mystery that surrounded Jews. Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* was only the best known of an enormous number of books the scenes of which were set in ancient Palestine or Babylonia, books which took their readers back in everyday language to the incidents of the Bible. In these stories, Jewish characters appeared in a variety of forms, generally sympathetically portrayed, but connected with the most sacred and mysterious events.

The attributes of mystery were naturally transferred to the present, since Jews had retained their identity from the most ancient times and since their strangeness gave continuing evidence of inexplicable characteristics. This mysterious strain explains the beautiful Jewess who appears so often in the novels of these years. She has antecedents of course in Scott's Rebecca and in Shakespeare's Jessica; but she is no mere copy. The American heroine is exquisitely beautiful and distinguished by great nobility of character. Some taint, curse, or fateful misfortune involves her in intricate difficulties which, however, lead to a happy ending. Often she is juxtaposed with a mean and miserly father, who is, in a sense, her taint, the source through his paternity of her troubles. The mysterious element here is hereditary, in a way, racial.

These mysterious racial ties can also take other forms. In 1872, Lynn Linton, a popular English writer of romantic stories, described in a novel the life of a revolutionary who attempted in modern times to pattern his acts exactly upon those of Christ. To heighten the analogy, the author gave her hero the English version of Christ's name, Joshua Davidson. The novel was well known in the United States. Twenty years later, Jesse Jones, a radical New England minister who had his own doctrines of social reform to expound, labored on a novel that used the same device. However, Jones felt the compulsion to secure for his protagonist a Jewish ancestor, one of "Israel's sacred race," a grandfather, from whom Joshua could learn "as a 'son of the Law,' the sacred Lore of Israel." The injection of this element was significant, for it suggested that there was a mysterious body of knowledge available only to "one of the blood."

IN THIS review of the American image of the Jew, we have succeeded in crystallizing three elements: the stereotype of the immigrant Jew, the relationship to finance, and the sense of mystery. In the writings of the populist leader Ignatius Donnelly one may trace the combination of those elements into a pattern that markedly influenced many of the earnest radicals of the period. In *Caesar's Column,* a utopian novel, Donnelly looked ahead to a period when "the task which Hannibal attempted . . . to subject the Latin and mixed-Gothic races of Europe to the domination of the Semitic blood," had been accomplished "by the cousins of the Phoenicians, the Israelites. The nomadic children of Abraham . . . [had] fought and schemed their way, through infinite pains of persecution . . . to a power higher than the thrones of Europe."

At that future date, "survival of the fittest" had made the aristocracy of the world "almost altogether of Hebrew origin." Christians had earlier subjected the Jews "to the most terrible ordeal of persecution. . . . Only the strong of body, the cunning of brain . . . the men with capacity to live

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where a dog would starve, survived the awful trial. . . . Now the Christian world is paying in tears and blood for the sufferings inflicted by their bigoted and ignorant ancestors upon a noble race. . . . The great money-getters of the world . . . rose from dealers in old clothes and peddlers of hats to merchants, to bankers, to princes. They were as merciless to the Christian as the Christian had been to them." Under the leadership of Prince Cabono, born Jacob Isaacs, the Jewish oligarchy was pushing the world toward destruction.

In this anticipation of things to come is a tone of fear. The radical urging changes yet dreads the effects of change. For Donnelly was no facile optimist as to the possibility of reform. His revolution degenerates into an orgy of destruction in which the whole of civilization is consumed.

Significantly, the brains of the revolutionary organization was "a Russian Jew . . . a cripple, driven out of his synagogue in Russia, years ago, for some crimes he had committed." With the success of the uprising, he fled to Judea, taking with him one hundred million dollars of public funds, with this vast wealth intending to "re-establish the glories of Solomon, and revive the ancient splendors of the Jewish race, in the midst of the ruins of the world."

There were specific reasons for the distrust of revolutionary violence. The labor rioting at Homestead, at Coeur d'Alene, and at Pullman in these years, the activities of the anarchists at home and in Europe, had the substantial citizens eager to build armories in the middle of the cities and had even the radicals worried about the dangers of unrestrained socialism.

But more interesting for our purposes is the implication in *Caesar's Column* that there were hidden organizations, conservative and radical, working toward hidden Jewish ends. To that suspicion would later be added confused impressions of what the Zionist Basel Congress of 1897 was up to, hazy recollections of European charges, and the explicit accusation of the Protocols of Zion that the gold standard was the Jewish tool of world domination. The sum total would be the conspiracy of the international Jew. Millions of well-intentioned Americans would find the later anti-Semitic libel credible because they had already accepted it in a form that was not anti-Semitic.

II

THERE still remains the task of accounting for the sense of fear from which the idea of conspiracy grew, a sense that was repeatedly expressed in other connections as well. The apocalyptic visions of the radicals in these years were often stated in terms of imminence of doom. They envisaged a great era of ruin and destruction that would precede the final redemption and reconstruction of society. The conviction that suffering was inevitable was fed by memories of the Commune of 1870, by scientific descriptions of lost worlds or of the end of this one, by the analogy with the reign of anti-Christ that was to precede the second coming, and by the figure of Christ himself.

Thus in both the English and the American *Joshua Davidson*, the martyr hero is killed by the very people to whom he preached and for whom he suffered. Donnelly's novel of revolt ended in disaster as did Jack London's a few years later.

These uneasy conceptions of the future were judgments of the unhappy nature of the present in which they were written. Certainly in the turbulent decade of the 1890's there was much that seemed to be changing—and for the worse. For the class in which Edith Wharton and Henry Adams grew up, the changes appeared to be a deterioration of culture; and the reaction of that class was fastidiousness in speech and manners. But for the mass of Americans, change took another form.

Through the period change centered in the city, an object of dread and fascination. To the city, and particularly to New York, whole regions of the South and West felt themselves in bondage. Yet to the people of those regions, the metropolis was altogether strange; often their only source of information was the lurid detective story. The farmers' view of the city was therefore based less

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on knowledge of it than on its impact upon them.

The cities were unnatural. They worshiped Mammon not God. They could all burn down, Bryan declaimed, and the great heart of America would still beat. "Embodied paganism," the city was "composed of the people of this world . . . seeking the ends of this world . . . satiating the animal man with the riches, with the lavish luxury of things." The city, "Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth . . . drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . . reigneth over the kings of the earth"—and feeds off the nations.

This literal fear of the city was not altogether surprising in a period which, despite its rationalism, still found popular the occult, spiritualism, mesmerism, theosophy, astrology, mental healing, even among the intellectual reformers. Nor is it unexpected that some men should transfer the blame for their tribulations to those alien places. In the same years, others were blaming the Pope or secret societies, and one ingenious author even demonstrated that the Jesuits had infiltrated the Masonic societies in order to spread atheism in the United States. The city was indeed a likely butt for the hatred and resentments of disappointed people.

In the United States, the Jews were particularly connected with the city through the commerce that was its lifeblood. Coming back in 1907, Henry James was impressed by the alien quality of American cities. He noted "the extent of the Hebrew conquest of New York," a new Jerusalem, and felt a certitude that the culture of the future in this country might be beautiful in its own right, but would inevitably be totally strange.

This was the opinion of a widely traveled man of the world. But what did the farmers think in the populist areas while the mounting burden of debt loosened their hold on the land? In the years of populism's mounting strength, William Allen White was reaching maturity in Eldorado, Kansas. The children of the few Jews in town mixed freely with the adolescent elite of which White was himself a member, just as Maurice Levy was one of the Booth Tarkington boys. When White thought of the Jew he thought of the wealth of the tradespeople, of the luxury of their weddings. Himself well off, his impressions were favorable.

But there were others, many others, who believed "all trade is treachery," who believed that commerce "by the manipulation of Satan" has become "a curse to humanity" dominating all the people of the earth. To those people every Jewish storekeeper was in the advance guard of the new civilization, bore the standard of all the dread forces that threatened their security.

Two decades later, F. Scott Fitzgerald, a boy who had grown up in Donnelly's Minnesota, who had come to New York and never adjusted to the change, gave explicit statement to that sentiment. Down the street, the hero of one of his novels "read a dozen Jewish names on a line of stores; in the door of each stood a dark little man watching the passers from intent eyes—eyes gleaming with suspicion, with pride, with clarity, with cupidity, with comprehension. New York—he could not dissociate it now from the slow upward creep of this people—the little stores, growing, expanding. . . . It was impressive—in perspective it was tremendous."

In those formative years of the 1890's, the injured groups of American society, in agony, had emitted the cries of an infant without words to express its pain. Searching vainly for the means of relief, they could somehow guess that the source of their trials was a change going on in the world in which they lived. And groping toward an understanding of that change, some perceived as its instrument the Jew. If all trade was treachery and the city was Babylon, then the Jew stood ready to be assigned the role of arch-conspirator.

It was this suspicion that would transform the conception of the Jew in the 20th century. Growing in intensity under the heat of racism and xenophobia and frustration after 1913, it would put in the place of the older images that of the Elders of Zion.

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BEHIND WINSTON CHURCHILL'S GRAND STYLE

Britain's Prophet of Doom and Defiance

HERBERT HOWARTH

FRANKLY, the cult of Churchill as a writer, with the acclamations and awards as his successive volumes appear, is not likable. Many of his devotees worship him blindly; few really expose themselves to the climate of his writing. They resemble the "mechanicals" in a Shakespearean mob, who throw up their nightcaps when the rest do. And as no one understands and enjoys crowds better than Churchill, he tends to give them, in and out of season, the mannerisms they expect. There are quantities of bad writing in him, and the popular Churchillian sentiment leads to their increase, while we lose sight of the other Churchill, a man capable both of practical achievements and wild fantasy, and, by the same token, of prophetic intuition.

It would be easy to lift passages from Churchill's books and ridicule their inflated style, or equally easy to point out clear, vigorous chapters like his story of the field of Blenheim. Neither of these procedures recommends itself. But it is a worthwhile task to correlate the weaknesses and strengths of his prose when they appear together, and to interpret, however speculatively, the prophetic and mythical silhouettes which they jointly shadow forth.

FROM the outset Churchill showed a capacity for being different and striking new trails. One of the few schoolboy memories that he has published makes this clear. He couldn't translate his Latin, so he made an alliance with one of the seniors—who helped him out with the classics provided that in return Churchill composed the weekly essay which seniors wrote for the headmaster. Churchill recalls, in *My Early Life*, "I used to walk up and down the room dictating—just as I do now—and he sat in a corner and wrote it down in longhand." Eventually the young orator did his work too well. The headmaster was attracted by the ideas put forward, and invited the senior to a discussion, which the latter found very trying, as he only half understood the sense of Churchill's argument. Afterwards, Churchill was careful to meet this contract with more conventional ideas, but his natural bent had already manifested itself.

Yet in Churchill's earliest published writings the insistence is on facts. He first made a mark in the world as a journalist. When he was commissioned by the London *Morning Post* to cover the war with the Boers in South Africa, he was already, a young man of twenty-five, in command of the highest fee known to have been paid to a British war correspondent up to that time. His skill lay in presenting campaigns and their problems for the public understanding.

Such a skill is never lost or laid aside. Through fifty years of work it has served Churchill. But since 1900 he has reared an

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IF PHILOSOPHERS cannot become kings, as Plato hoped they would, then probably the next best thing is for journalists to become prime ministers—like Winston Churchill. Then, no matter what the fate of their political careers—and they seem to make out no worse than others—they can at least leave a record for posterity to read and study. Such a record is supplied by Churchill's war memoirs, four volumes of which have already appeared. In this article, HERBERT HOWARTH examines Churchill as a literary man, with special reference to the famous and much admired "Churchill style," and finds that such an examination tells us a good deal about Churchill the man and Churchill the political leader. Mr. Howarth studied at Oxford and the University of Cairo, and between 1943 and 1945 was an official with the British administration in Palestine. Since 1946 he has been employed in the London office of the Jewish Agency. His most recent article in COMMENTARY was "Flecker: The Poet and His East," in the May issue.

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immense Tower-of-Babel superstructure on this skill. Describing how he developed the distinctive features of his style, he has said, "I affected a combination of the styles of Macaulay and Gibbon . . . and I stuck in a bit of my own from time to time." Macaulay and Gibbon have real literary interest, with a deep, almost Gothic individual violence of style, but Churchill borrowed from them only what they are more commonly admired for—their imposing surface edifice. Consequently, his writing often lacks sharp human exactitude, which is replaced by an ostentatious but vague and indiscriminate magnificence. Here is the music of the emerging Churchillian mythos.

WHY was he attracted to the rhetorical periods and coloring of the 18th-century pastiche that the world now identifies with his name? At his busiest as prime minister plus minister of defense in the recent war, he often discarded this ponderous style, but for the purposes of maintaining the Churchill legend he always exploits it. It exudes that mystery and aura of fear and hope that he has radiated to audiences in many countries.

This rhetoric seems bound up with an intuition of the movements of history. In all he does, Churchill appears to keep before him a picture of history flowing in a dynamic pattern. The images of tides, currents, fires, recur as he heaves up words to convey this picture to the audience; and sometimes, in the effort, he mixes them queerly, so that they make nonsense if submitted to strict analysis, but still they cumulatively suggest the intensity and violence of the picture obsessing him. Because this picture genuinely represents the world for him, it may be said that he really thinks freedom to be the recognition of necessity. The man who can see the world pattern as completely as Churchill feels he can, this is the man who has a prospect of traveling on the crest of the tide, and so being successful, great, and free.

Some of his contemporaries have shared this outlook. H. G. Wells, for example, had a similar love of large, pioneer thinking, of images of titanic warfare and destructive battles in sea and sky. There was something similar in Arnold Toynbee's attempt at a synthetic history and the charting of human patterns, including the pattern of the Prophets. The rhetoric of Smuts, once Churchill's foe and then his friend and ally, is blood-related, dependent on the crystallization of monumental (and deceptive) simplicities, like the one that came to him as he flew over his continent from the Cape to Cairo, an intuition of "the greatness of Africa and goodness of man." Possibly T. E. Lawrence's vision of the "dream-palace" of the Semitic national idea belonged to the same trend. But T. E. Lawrence differed: in the end, by his failure in life itself and his subsequent self-punishment in exposure to pain, his feeling was utterly modified, tortured, and refined to a human and almost individual literary level.

Attempting like other eminent thinkers of his age to work on a grand historical canvas, Churchill went for help to the past. To evolve a medium for formulating and communicating his sense of history, he turned to Gibbon and Macaulay, as magisterial figures from whom he might wrest the power of the epic style, and use it to rally the public behind him. All his prose implies this call: "Follow me on the crest of the wave. I know where history is going, and any other way but behind me you are lost." To redeem his people by magnetizing them to follow where he rushed forward, that must have been the unconscious aim of his theatricality.

FURIOUSLY practicing his art, Churchill often employed it where it was unnecessary. With a self-critical humor that is one of his counterbalancing and most winning traits, he has written how a fellow journalist looked over his shoulder one day when he was completing an elaborate passage for *The River War* and burst into an irreverent laugh. "Finish it yourself then," Churchill said, and walked away. When he came back to see how his colleague had solved the problem, he found "Pop-pop-pop-pop" in miniature

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handwriting, and then an enormous "BANG!" There were, and there are, these artillery salvos all over Churchill's books. He was never willing to leave the cannon or the trumpets behind. As the self-appointed prophet of world crises, he needed them.

He lived for crises—to prophesy them, participate in them, and write their annals. For the prophet every moment is a crisis; the world is always about to rise or fall. And exaggerations inevitably creep in. For instance, when Churchill comments on the death of Gladstone, he describes it in a way which cannot seriously be justified, as a fateful crisis in the life of Parliament: "So long as his light lasted the House of Commons lived, and amid the fiercest passions and even scenes of violence preserved its hold upon the sympathies and imagination of the whole world; and at his death it sank at once, perhaps for ever, in public esteem."

Churchill is highly conscious of his prophetic role. He has written an essay about Moses which is nothing but the retelling of the ancient story, with no *raison d'être* except the supposition on the part of the author—or some editor—that the public would like to read a prophet on a prophet. He likes to call on the Bible for prophetic metaphors. He is bad at describing trivia, and dodges the problem by enveloping them with verbal pomp and resonances. Only, when he has something really good to say, he is often brilliant at varying his tone between decisive factuality, impish humor, and the favorite prophetic clarion call.

His prevailing desire is to interpret immediate events in terms of panoramic history. He strains on tiptoe to peer into the future, and like his contemporary Wells, he glimpses in his vision both the unfolding of Utopia, and the preliminary terror of Og, Gog, and Magog stalking from the old Orient to blast the world. Churchill knows a good deal about the value of common sense, always applies it when actually handling a crisis, and in his oratory always extols it. But the inner Churchill is not deeply interested by common sense. He has imaginatively struck an alliance with the thoughtful and romantic Lord Percy who, as described in *My Early Life*: ". . . had travelled widely in the highlands of Asia Minor and the Caucasus, feasting with princely barbarians and fasting with priestly fanatics. Over him the East exercised the spell it cast over Disraeli. He might, indeed, have stepped out of the pages of *Tancred* or *Coningsby*." He follows in the wake of Lord Percy, and other Englishmen, even statesmen, who responded to the appeal of the remote—and like them he imaginatively ranges the world for the Grail or the Messiah.

So the world picture winking before him shows life as a desperate and ever-about-to-be-crucial struggle between Good and Evil, between Hope and Peril, between the Demons and the Messiah. Whoever expects the Messiah must expect the warring demons with him, and cannot be worthy of the one unless he dares experience the other. Churchill's attitudes to the real world may often be understood as an attempt to make it correspond with the inner picture. In the global conflict of a decade ago he found an equation for the Demons which has become familiar to all the world: ". . . the demon genius sprung from the abyss of poverty, inflamed by defeat, devoured by hatred and revenge, and convulsed by his design to make the German race masters of Europe or maybe the world"—so he pairs Hitler and the Demons in his history of the Second World War. But long before Hitler he sought and found other equations. During the late 20's and the 30's he almost immunized Parliament, though not the people, by over-frequent repetitions of his image of alarm and fear: "the nameless beast so long foretold in Russian legend." Putting on his prophetic mantle, he queried, "Who shall say that the world itself will not be wrecked, or indeed that it ought not to be wrecked? There are nightmares of the future from which a fortunate collision with some wandering star, reducing the earth to incandescent gas, might be a merciful deliverance. . . ."

But the negative conclusion of the passage just quoted is exceptional. The dominant

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idea is to see Armageddon as the unavoidable prelude to peace and order. To this extent Churchill has an absolute need of his enemies, his Hitler, his demons. We can see this rather beautifully demonstrated when he turns to other epochs than our own and looks around to identify the demons of that time. In the first volume of the biography of his ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, he fixes a gaze on Louis XIV: "No worse enemy of human freedom has ever appeared in the trappings of polite civilization. Insatiable appetite, cold, calculating ruthlessness, monumental conceit, presented themselves armed with fire and sword. The veneer of culture and good manners, of brilliant ceremonies and elaborate etiquette, only adds a heightening effect to the villainy of his life's story. Better the barbarian conquerors of antiquity, primordial figures of the abyss, than this high-heeled, beperiwigged dandy, strutting amid the bows and scrapes of mistresses and confessors to the torment of his age." It is exhilarating insult. And how significant it is. "Better the barbarian." Better the Russian than the Frenchman; better Genghis Khan; better the legendary and bestial giants of Asia. He strains to approximate more and more to the image, which his heart and the common folk understand, of the monsters and their leap to the ultimate clash of history. In this sense, is any man nearer to the Marxist mind than the anti-Marxist Churchill?

The position is illuminated in a paragraph of *Thoughts and Adventures* where he pays homage to another literary soothsayer—to the Tennyson of "Locksley Hall," who

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and
there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in
the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the
south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples
plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and
the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation
of the world.

Churchill writes a paean on this: "We may search the Scriptures in vain for such precise and swiftly vindicated forecasts of the future. Jeremiah and Isaiah dealt in dark and cryptic parables pointing to remote events and capable of many varied interpretations from time to time. A Judge, a Prophet, a Redeemer would arise to save his Chosen People; and from age to age the Jews asked, disputing, 'Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?' But 'Locksley Hall' contains an exact foretelling of stupendous events, which many of those who knew the writer lived to see and endure! The dawn of the Victorian era opened the new period of man; and the genius of the poet pierced the veil of the future." The Tennysonian verses, like the messianic legend, admit destruction as the harbinger of peaceful unity. Only, one is bound to ask—seeing that peace is the aim of his struggle—why Churchill is less inspired by the problems of victorious peace than by the struggle itself and by his feeling that when the bombs fall, "It's a grand life, if we don't weaken."

To attempt an answer to this question, it may help first of all to single out certain overt aspects of Churchill's thinking. There was an ardent Liberal phase in his life at the outset of the century. This Liberalism, not really gone even in his Tory old age, is a diluted expression of his primitive hope of world betterment. A stronger form of this hope is the bold Churchillian insight into factual problems, his willingness to throw habits and routine into the melting pot and forge completely new shapes, his resolute march, no matter whether befriended or alone, into untracked territories. A new invention or an ideal newly proclaimed—to either of these his warm imagination is receptive. He has today, at seventy-six, the plastic imagination of a young man.

It is as if he grew quickly out of childhood, and then his psyche sharply stopped growing.

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Men of advancing years often have vivid childhood memories and speak of children intimately. But if Churchill writes of children, it is ineptly, like a young man whose childhood memories are still blank. Like a young man, in the bad and the good sense, he writes and he lives, and abounds still in the élan, the untainted egoism, that gave allure to the bombast of his maiden speech. That speech was delivered on the barricades which had been erected, by certain prudes, on London's Empire Theater promenade to divide it off from the music hall bar, and which barricades Churchill and his friends had that night physically torn down. He delivered his harangue, he has recorded, with pictures in his mind of the slaying of Julius Caesar and the taking of the Bastille. He harangues no differently today, whether against a foreign potentate or a minor grievance of home politics—his words pouring out of the youth fixated in him.

This lovable and dangerous Puck within, whom time has by-passed, lent him on the warring side his quick appreciation of scientific weapons and the strength to cut through red tape and get them developed, as he says about a high-frequency development of June 1940: "Being master, and not having to argue too much, once I was convinced about the principles of this queer and deadly game I gave all the necessary orders that very day in June. . . . Obedience was forthcoming with alacrity, and on the fringes all obstructions could be swept away."

On the creative side the same Puck gave him the power to enter imaginatively into the personality of Chaim Weizmann, and to understand his longing to reverse and fulfill history. The comprehension that he freely gave, and the fire that he richly borrowed from Weizmann—the same exchange he was able in a different degree to make with Abdullah on the morning of the opportunist foray into Amman. He felt, reminiscing later over a single meeting, that he might have made the same exchange with Enver Pasha, "this fine-looking officer, whose audacious gesture had at the peril of his life swept away the decayed regime of Abdul Hamid, and who had become in one leopard-spring the hero of the Turkish nation." Something in Churchill answered passionately the appeal of these men whose beginnings and whose mentality were so different from his. Among princely barbarians and priestly fanatics his senses vibrated, his mind braced itself to extra vigilance.

WHERE was the root of his imaginative sympathy with the audacious of mind like Enver and the intense of hope like Weizmann? The root reaches down to his feeling for the movements of history. He could look forward so far because his inward eye could also range so far in the other direction—to the past, scrutinizing and sharing the lives of ancestors whose problems and actions were written in history. Looking backward had long been one of the pleasures of the Churchills. A former Sir Winston, driven into enforced leisure by the defeat of the Royalist party in 1646, had consoled himself by authorship and by study of his pedigree and arms. The zeal of the 17th-century Churchill continues as a deeply implanted drive in the 20th-century statesman. The earlier Winston was the father of the Duke of Marlborough, whose widow, when told of researches to establish the importance of his forebears, dismissed them with the comment, "I value nobody for another's merit." This sensible judgment is quoted and rebutted by the modern Churchill, who, as Marlborough's biographer, urges the importance of hereditary genius, and says of the line begun in 1649: "The military strain flowed strong and clear from the captain of the Civil Wars, student of heraldry and history, and champion of the Divine Right. It was his blood, and not his pen, that carried the message." The sense of family and of the voices of the past in the blood predominates in this house.

In the living representative of the house, who has rejected all titles and has insisted on remaining "Mr. Churchill," this sense of heredity has been stimulated to hyperactivity. How? One can only guess; but any guess is likely to begin with the same important point. It is a commonplace of biography that

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he was devoted to the memory of his father. Thanks partly to the boarding-school system and partly to his father's preoccupations, he saw, as a boy, comparatively little of Lord Randolph Churchill, who, while the son traversed the school curriculum, traversed the political stage from promise and exaltation to disappointment and collapse. "I was his vehement partisan," Winston says in *My Early Life,* and he also has to say, with pride and pain, "Three or four long intimate conversations [with my father] . . . are all I can boast." The distance imposed by the family life of that class at that period doubled his profound response to his father's personality. He felt fierce impulses to help him in his politicial struggle.

Lord Randolph died in 1895 just before the young man, almost twenty-one, was gazetted to the 4th Hussars. Churchill describes his death with absolutely unrhetorical sincerity. "I ran in the darkness across Grosvenor Square, then wrapped in snow. His end was quite painless. Indeed he had long been in stupor. All my dreams of comradeship with him, of entering Parliament at his side and in his support, were ended. There remained for me only to pursue his aims and vindicate his memory."

The main resolution of Winston Churchill's life thus crystallized: to vindicate Lord Randolph's political memory. Personal ambition brimmed in him, and his course might not have been much different if his father's career had closed differently; but the nature of his drive was transfigured by the demand that life should give back the success withdrawn from his father. From this grew his restlessness, his unappeased striving always to do something more, the exertion of his strength beyond the capacities of other men, his eagerness. These qualities stretch into absurdity at times, and H. G. Wells had no difficulty in caricaturing them in *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* (1930): "Mr. Brimstone Burchell seemed always to be coming in or going out or talking in much too audible undertones to someone while the Council was in session. No one had asked him; he just came. It was difficult to find an appropriate moment to say something about it. On the whole he seemed to be well disposed and eager to take entire charge of army, navy, air force, munitions, finance or any other leading function which might be entrusted to him." At the bottom of this avid enthusiasm was the resolve born of pride in his father and family; and his energy, his egoism, his intuitions of the past, his sympathy for movements and ideals rooted in history—they may all be but complicated extensions of this.

If it was his father's decline that stung all the latent powers of the boy to life, it might almost be said that the failure of the one led to the success of the other. Churchill has himself interpreted the forging of the Duke of Marlborough's genius in similar terms, tracing it to the restraints under which that hero's father had lived when the Cavalier cause failed.

Lord Randolph's failure was splendidly vindicated. But in such a situation the passionate effort to succeed on the father's behalf was linked to a darker yearning to fail with the father. The joint operation of these impulses underlies one of the most pointed paragraphs in Churchill's history of the recent war, a paragraph so consciously written for posterity in the style of Caesar that wit plays round its edges: "At the outset of this mighty battle, I acquired the chief power in the state, which henceforth I wielded in ever-growing measure for five years and three months of world war, at the end of which time, all our enemies having surrendered unconditionally or being about to do so, I was immediately dismissed by the British electorate from all further conduct of their affairs." So he is at once the father vindicated and the father dismissed, at once Caesar, the general and historian, and the slayer of Caesar (see the story of the Empire Theater above). And so he can never be the harvester of the victorious peace because failure, too, is one of his motives.

But there is an important limit to his acceptance of Lord Randolph's failure. It is difficult for a son to assimilate the defeat of a father, and even Churchill cannot follow

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his model past a certain point in the curve of decline. Now, political decline is sometimes accompanied by great gains, in a literary as well as a spiritual sense. Has the younger Churchill forfeited the gains by hesitating to explore the final degrees of Lord Randolph's sufferings? In his standard biography of his father, published 1906, he has made it clear, in richly documented narrative, that the "wit, abuse, epigrams, imagery, argument," which marked the period of Lord Randolph's ascendancy, and which he has always emulated, changed at the close. The verbal acrobatics of the time of success were somewhat showy; they were transmuted some years later by suffering and disease. The imagery took on genuine literary beauty; through the involuntary suffering of the man, it lost its humor and its debating pugilism for the beauty of the gargoyle and the vehemence of the garroter—for that tormented viciousness which distinguishes literature from rhetoric. Did Churchill dare follow his model thus far?

When, as biographer, he writes the story of one of Lord Randolph's last great speeches, he recreates the scene and the isolation of the protagonist with skilful dramatic touches, but he balks at the actual repetition of the phrase with which his father reached the climax. Lord Randolph was attacking the government (his own side of the House) for proceeding to a commission of enquiry against the Irish leader, Parnell, on no better basis than a letter at last found to be the work of a forger, Pigott. "'A Nemesis awaits a Government that adopts unconstitutional methods. What,' he asked, 'has been the result of this uprootal of constitutional practice?' Then in a fierce whisper, hissing through the House, 'Pigott!'—then in an outburst of uncontrollable passion and disgust—'a man, a thing, a reptile, a monster—Pigott!'—and then again with a phrase at which the House shuddered, 'Pigott! Pigott! Pigott!'" *A phrase at which the House shuddered*—that is a dramatic way of putting it, but it euphemizes the reality, which is relegated to an appendix. There it appears in a verbatim reprint of a memorandum by L. J. Jennings, who that night broke forever with his friend Randolph Churchill, hearing him accuse the government of calling into existence "the bloody, rotten, ghastly foetus, Pigott, Pigott, Pigott." This zenith of a solemn speech is the terrible and genuine expression of an inner death and the abortion of all hopes. His son winces and pushes it aside; his father is not to be followed that far; Winston is determined to keep his mind young and ardent, free alike from corrosion and poetry.

What he could and did do to assimilate his father's failure was to develop a world view characterized by the inclusion of great failure in close company with great success. He translated his problems into messianic imagery revealing failure and success in a single flash.

THERE are exceptional times when Churchill tries to get away from failure and simply to evoke success, rectitude, orthodoxy. He is then at his worst as a writer. To take a sample. In his *Marlborough* he considers the question of the Duke's married life; he was assisted in preparing this book by a most able research worker, and he prints wonderful passages from the Duchess's letters to prove the reality of her love for Duke John. But he will not let the matter rest at that. He feels that something of his own is expected and trundles out a psalm: "These are tremendous facts, lifting the relations of men and women above the human scene with all its faults and cares. They rekindle in every generous bosom the hope that things may happen here in the life of the humblest mortals which roll round the universe and win everlasting sanction."

The mishandling of orthodox themes like marriage is perhaps the obverse of his mishandling of such a subject as children. Churchill could not write sensitively about children because he has a youth's blind spot that blacks out his childhood. He cannot write realistically about marriage because in a strictly psychological sense he has never grown out of the age of romance. He is indeed a fixated youth. And yet this candid youthfulness does provide him at times with

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a good alternative to the messianic rhetoric. It makes him master of a straight, quick, biting, factual freshness; something truly *unorthodox*; an intrusive unconventionality that thrusts its way past the handicaps of accepted doctrine.

So it is that in ministerial life he has always been able to look at practical problems completely anew. Some of the memoranda where this gift has been in action are, by purely stylistic criteria, among his best writings because free from style. Those published in his volumes on the Second World War illustrate the urgent, imperious qualities of good English. Take his note on the "sticky-bomb," printed in *Their Finest Hour*: "Any chortling by officials who have been slothful in pushing this bomb over the fact that at present it has not succeeded will be viewed with great disfavour by me." Where he has an immediate practical task in front of him, he abandons rhetoric and demonstrates the use of words to get things done.

Is prose of this sort also literature? One might quote Gide's Geneviève against the literature that forgoes truth for style, and argue that by Gide's verdict the memoranda are above literature just as the bombast is beneath it. But the very act of mentioning Gide would show up the astronomical distance between Churchill's writing and permanent literature. The best that can be said is that the deficiency of Churchill's best writing is a deficiency of genre: he writes the literature of the Parliamentarian.

There is a passage in a letter of T. E. Lawrence to Edward Marsh: "Winston wrote me a gorgeous letter. Called his *Crisis* a potboiler! Some pot! and probably some boil, too.* I suppose he realizes that he's the only high person, since Thucydides and Clarendon, who has put his generation, imaginatively, in his debt." Now T. E. Lawrence went out to seek monastic suffering with at least a secondary hope that it would help him to write literature. Essays in literature, what else were the noble compliments to every sort of artist with which, in prolonged humility, he filled his correspondence? There was no successful creator in him. But there was a sharp, critical brain, and sometimes this made the compliments ambiguous. Such a critical irony may be present here. The catch in the eulogy of Churchill is the accent on *high* persons. Generally speaking, Britain's legislators and senators are not distinguished as creative writers. They include able writers and imposing writers, whose work may now and again pass to posterity, but their labors are in this other genre which is millennia away from the literature of a Gide or an Eliot.

Churchill's humorous passages are also Parliamentarian and perishable. But for that very same reason how enjoyable they can be, especially when the pungency of the memorandum style marries with the humor. For instance, his passage on the German decision to protract the defense of Tunisia: "While I always hesitate to say anything which might afterwards look like over-confidence, I cannot resist the remark that one seems to discern in this policy the touch of the master-hand, the same master-hand that planned the attack on Stalingrad, and that has brought upon the German armies the greatest disaster they have ever suffered in their military history." However, the humor here is close to the pleasure of insult, which has a passionate side to it; and an equally significant aspect of Churchill's humor is that it is often free from passion—his only manifestation of neutrality. It bespeaks an easy assurance and confidence in life. Several times Churchill has survived accidents that would usually have been fatal, like the air crash described in *Thoughts and Adventures*, and he has constantly exposed himself to hazards. The followers of Jung say that a man who emerges from accidents is a man who still has work to do, who is possessed of powers that he still has to use. A long sequence of close encounters with death seems to have led Churchill to apply this rule to himself. His sentences occasionally brim with pure pleasure of life; and if passages

*Was Churchill echoing this when he captured the fancy of the Canadian parliament during the last war with "Some chicken! Some neck!"

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that carry this feeling are also stained with the special egoism of autobiographical understatement, they are lovable for their serene aplomb.

MAYBE one should admit that in less than a hundred years Churchill's books will scarcely be read by lovers of literature, only by students of history. He commands attention today as a prophet, but prophecies may make dull reading in the aftertime, and the drama of Churchill's style may be contrary to the taste of an age to come. He may be like another prophet, to whom he often refers: Disraeli. Disraeli's writing, admired in his own day, has dropped out of currency and is hard work to the student now. But Disraeli remains in the national memory, not as an author, nor exactly as a statesman, but as a great image collecting in himself part of an epos. It is the figure of the prophet that survives instead of his prophecies; and so it may be with Churchill.

Or a fission may take place, to produce two separate Churchill myths: the myth of Churchill peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon people, and the myth as formulated among other nations with quicker temperaments. Even at present, with the original still happily alive, his shadow self already appears, and it is already splitting, with the second version coming into existence the more rapidly of the two.

In Tel Aviv in 1945 I saw a "prototype" of the powerful legendary conception of Churchill that may coalesce from the hopes of men and women and replace the actual figure. It appeared in a play, *Churchill's Mission*. The author had written it in German, using the pseudonym of "Alexander Ebenezer": he was approaching his middle years; born in Poland; small, red-haired; tough of frame, yet nervous and touched with the unworldly benevolence of a hermit. Into a strange story built on documentary lines, showing crucial events of Churchill's career—his capture by the Boers and his early meeting with Smuts; his acceptance of the leadership of Britain in 1940; the later war years and the meeting with Roosevelt and Stalin at Teheran—he wove allegorical material based on popular Cabalism. Tiny speeches and incidents were meant to illuminate the ancient past like lightning flashes. A journalist, discovered to be the incarnation of Daniel, moved across the scene with the haunting ubiquity of the Meshulach in *The Dybbuk* and admonished the statesmen to remember their obligations to history. The conference room at Teheran was transformed into the palace of Nebuchadnezzar and the writing on the wall flamed over the Big Three as they debated the degree of Jewish emancipation in their respective countries.

What this play suggests is that the messianic attributes of Churchill's inspirational writing may be assumed by the man himself in the eyes of peoples who have real or spiritual irridenta before them. On him, once gone and altered to a great memory, the eyes of the oppressed may turn, of the oppressed who still cherish the dream of an individual divinely guided to bring order to the earth. Let there be no attempt to comment here on the danger as well as the beauty of this mythos, which may sometimes stimulate an individual to valuable action, but which may also excuse him for finding the Messiah in himself. Let it only be said that if this figure does form in the popular imagination, it will be the remarkable case of a statesman so completely projecting his inner picture through his writings that the world reflects it back on him even when the life and writings have ceased to glow.

Through such developments Churchill may retain his influence more as a character and an allusion in the books others write than by the books he has written himself. Yet possibly influence on that scale is not formed through print; or, if the formation of it is originally helped by print, print does not afterwards do most to carry it. It is the minds of men that irradiate it; and it is handed down, as this descendant of Marlborough liked to say of his family's genius, "along the blood, not by the pen"—only, along the blood of all people in the mass.

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AHAD HA'AM: NATIONALIST WITH A DIFFERENCE

A Zionism to Fulfill Judaism

HANS KOHN

MODERN Jewish nationalism arose, like other national movements, after the traditional and rigid texture of medieval life gave way before two new forces: a religious revival through pietism and mysticism with their appeal to individual emotions, and a reassertion of the individual in the secular rationalism of Enlightenment. Hasidism with its closed and emotion-fraught community life represented the religious revival in 18th-century East European Jewry; the Haskalah brought the Enlightenment with its world-open attitude and its rationalism from Germany to the Russian Jews. Asher Ginzberg was born in 1856 into a strictly Hasidic family and grew by his own efforts into Haskalah rationalism. Thus he represented in his life and work the impact of both these forces.

From Hasidism he inherited intensity of feeling, a burning though quiet faith. He always insisted on speaking of "love of Zion" instead of Zionism, and emphasized the emotional and moral tie. His life, like that of Mazzini, was entirely dedicated to his nationalist ideal; he became the apostle of one idea, devoting little time or active interest to broader, or aesthetic, concerns. On the other hand, through the Haskalah he entered into the best heritage of the modern West. His intellectual honesty and self-discipline, his sober and responsible realism, his meticulous attention to fact and form alike, and his contempt for rhetoric and demagogy associated him more closely with Mill or Masaryk than with Mazzini. With Masaryk he shared also a religious ethicism outside any orthodox faith. Yet in his feelings he was profoundly in tune with the Jewish masses and their millenary nationalist hopes; though he was able to view them critically and with a dispassionate objectivity guided by universal values, his emotions often shaped his ultimate outlook.

The conditions of his upbringing made him a Jewish nationalist. In the middle of the 19th century the Russian Jewish masses were subjects of the Czar, but they were not of Russia and hardly in Russia. Their segregation was complete to a degree incomprehensible to citizens of modern nations. Ginzberg himself called the small town in which he was born "one of the most benighted spots in the Hasidic districts of Russia." His whole education was steeped in traditional Judaism without the slightest intrusion of any Russian or otherwise alien element. As a student he was not even allowed to look at the letters of the Russian alphabet, still less to learn Russian. "The reason was," he wrote in his reminiscences, "that my mother's father had with his own ears heard one of the great *tsaddikim* [Hasidic leaders] say that the sight of a foreign letter made the eyes unclean." Only at the age of twenty did he begin to learn Russian and German in earnest as an autodidact and almost surreptitiously. This learning opened a new world to him, but his faith and

AHAD HA'AM means in Hebrew "one of the people." Its use as a pen name by Asher Ginzberg (1856-1927) was at once appropriate and ironical. Appropriate, because he was an immensely popular Hebrew journalist and writer who helped found the Zionist movement in Eastern Europe, contributed to the revival of the Hebrew language, and is still regarded as one of the luminaries of 20th-century Jewish thought; ironical, because in his emphasis on the moral and spiritual aspects of the national revival, Ahad Ha'am found himself increasingly opposed to the more popular, and finally victorious, conception of Zionism as an essentially political movement. HANS KOHN here presents a picture of the man and an appraisal of his thought, which he finds not without relevance to the present situation of Israel and the Zionist movement. Dr. Kohn is well known for his books on nationalism and imperialism. He is professor of history at the City College of New York.

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security in that world were badly shaken by the pogroms of 1881 which put an end to the hopeful liberal reform era of Alexander II.

In turn, the life of the Jewish masses in Russia in Asher Ginzberg's early years allowed hardly any knowledge of Russian life or identification with Russia. A feeling of indelible hostility between Israel and the other peoples, especially their governments and officials, prevailed, a distrust and at the same time a contempt for the alien state within the borders of which they lived, and for their "fellow citizens" who were *goyim* to them. The old man, remembering the days of his youth when he longed for a broader education and contact with the world outside, tells the story of how a visiting government official suggested to his father that he be sent to a high school. "My father did not tell us what his answer had been; but he ended his story thus, 'Now go and explain a thing like this to a *goy*!' From the expression on the faces of those at the table it was evident that they needed no explanation: to them it was simple and obvious, and it was only the *goy* whose brain could not take it in."*

When he was almost thirty, Asher Ginzberg could escape from the "isolation and fanaticism" of the small town to Odessa, then the center of the Zionist movement which had started in 1881 to establish Jewish settlements in Palestine. There, in 1889, he "accidentally" became a Hebrew writer, "a thing he had never thought of till then." The pen name Ahad Ha'am with which he signed all his writings throughout his life was to indicate that he did not regard himself as a writer but as "one of the people" interested in the people's revival. Though he wrote much in later years, he never became a professional writer. He remained a merchant, jealous of his independence of mind and thought. Writing out of the deepest concern for the future and integrity of his people, he never submitted to the pressure of public opinion, "that despotic queen to whom I have never owed allegiance."

For six years, from 1896 to 1902, he was editor of the Hebrew monthly *Hashiloah*. Here, too, he was a nationalist with a difference: he chose the name from the passage in Isaiah where God threatens Israel with punishment because it despised "the waters of Shiloah which goes softly" and instead trusted strength and might. In his editorial statement he omitted all references to Palestine or Zionism. He wished to create an open forum which, far removed from any spirit of party or predetermined solution, would seek for deeper understanding of, and an unprejudiced approach to, the Jewish problem. As a writer and as an editor this "layman" became the great teacher of modern Hebrew literature. He introduced, and insisted upon, a strict respect for meticulous standards of literary form and genuine expression. A master of the cogently reasoned, lucid essay, he wrote only when he felt impelled by a sense of responsibility for the Jewish heritage and for the Jewish future.

Quality not quantity was his keyword for his own work, as for the solution of the Jewish problem. His essays were collected in four volumes under the title, *Al Parashat D'rakhim* ("At the Crossroads").† The book on Jewish ethics which he longed to write was never written. But most of his writings can be regarded as an ethical commentary on the Jewish problems and events of his day. Deeply steeped in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, he felt a close affinity with England and English literature. Of modern thinkers Locke and Hume, Mill and Spencer influenced him as decisively as they had influenced Masaryk. In 1907 he settled in London. Though he was then only fifty years old, his work was done. Not in London did he find the cultural atmosphere of that Russian Jewish environment in which he was rooted and of

* See Ahad Ha'am, *Essays, Letters, Memoirs*, ed. by Leon Simon (Oxford, East and West Library, 1946), p. 338. Leon Simon has the great merit of having made Ahad Ha'am accessible to English readers. See also his *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism* (London, Routledge, 1922) and *Selected Essays* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1912).

† The volumes appeared separately, the first in 1894. A new edition of the four volumes was published with an important preface in Berlin (Jüdischer Verlag, 1921).

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which he was the noblest fruit; and which apparently he needed to feed his spirit. Nor was he to find it later in Palestine, either.

II

His upbringing, as I have indicated, made Ahad Ha'am almost inescapably a Jewish nationalist. He could not understand that people of Jewish descent and faith could be, by their cultural roots and their free decision, Americans or Italians. To him a man of Jewish ancestry could only live fully and freely as a member of a Jewish nation, and he demanded that the Western Jews emancipate themselves "from the inner slavery and the spiritual degradation" of assimilation and thus become capable "and worthy of a life of dignity and freedom." Judaism to him was not only a spiritual tradition but a biological continuity. This feeling in him was as strong and as unbending as in the Jewish masses of his time: when his daughter married outside the Jewish race she died to him. Yet, as with Masaryk, the survival of his people seemed to him important and justified only through and for the sake of its spiritual heritage and ethical tradition. These seemed to him almost extinguished after three thousand years. To rekindle them was the goal and meaning of his nationalism, of his love of Zion.

In 1889 he published his first article, "Not This Is the Way." It already contained his whole doctrine. It made him unpopular within his own people, and unpopular he remained, as the prophets had been in their days. In his modesty he would never compare himself to them, yet it was as their disciple and for their sake that he was a Jewish nationalist. He demanded the survival of the Jewish people with every fiber of his heart, but in the fullness of his mind he knew that it was desirable and even practicable only if the Jews did not become like other peoples. Therein he disagreed fundamentally with the Zionists. Their nationalism seemed to him based upon an overestimation of quantity and power, of numbers and speed, so characteristic of the nationalism in the era of nationalistic conflicts in the years after 1860. For all their obeisance to the uniqueness of the Jewish people and its heritage, the Zionists' motive was the individual self-interest of the Jew seeking escape from anti-Semitism or misery and longing for economic betterment or political promotion. Ahad Ha'am never accepted the Zionist position as a possible foundation for a state in Palestine. He knew the means determine the end and the foundations define the strength of the structure. Like all ethical theorists, he was modest as regards the goal and exacting about the means.

"The main point, upon which everything depends, is not how much we do but how we do it," he wrote in his first report, "The Truth from Palestine." The Jews had survived, while all other ancient nations perished, because the prophets had taught them not to seek glory in the attainment of material power and political dominion. To create a small state, based upon power and diplomatic favors, would not add a glorious chapter to Jewish history but would undermine the historical basis of Jewish existence. Was it not worthier of "an ancient people which was once a beacon to the world" to perish than to reach such an end? Ahad Ha'am spoke not only as an ethical teacher. As a practical statesman he understood what the others wishfully forgot: that Palestine, on account of its geographic position and its religious importance, could never lead the secure life of a small nation like Switzerland.

Jewish nationalism envisaged the future in three different ways. Political Zionism regarded anti-Semitism as too powerful and too lasting to allow any Jewish future in the Diaspora. Leon Pinsker (1821-1891) in his *Autoemanzipation* (1882) and Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) in *Der Judenstaat* (1896) demanded a "normalization" of Jewish life after the model of the 19th-century nation-state. Nathan Birnbaum (1864-1937) and Simon Dubnow (1860-1941),* on the other hand, believed that two thousand years of existence could not be effaced and that the

* On this leading Jewish historian of modern times see the excellent essay by Koppel S. Pinson, "The National Theories of Simon Dubnow," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. X, pp. 335-58.

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"abnormal" national existence of the Jews might represent a higher form of historical development than territorial nationalism. Ahad Ha'am took his position between these two schools. He was convinced of the permanency of the Diaspora, but he believed in the need of a center which would counteract the atomizing tendencies of a scattered world-wide existence.

This center could not be anywhere else but in the historic home of Palestine. It should rekindle the creative spirit of Judaism and fill the hearts of Jews everywhere with love and pride. Such a center could not solve the economic and political afflictions of individual Jews suffering from poverty or persecution. The small country of Palestine could never gather, as the prayer book demands, the scattered ones from the four corners of the earth. That could happen only in the days of the Messiah when all problems would be solved in a regenerated mankind. To confound messianic hopes and political potentialities could lead only to moral and actual disaster.

To Ahad Ha'am the creation of such a center was a necessity for Judaism even if there were no poverty or anti-Semitism. In the villages and cities of Palestine, Jews would lead a full life in the spirit of the Jewish national tradition, and this would exercise a revitalizing spiritual effect on the Diaspora. For that reason Ahad Ha'am called it a spiritual center, "a refuge not for all Jews who need peace and bread," he wrote in 1907, "but for the spirit of the people, for that distinctive cultural form, the result of a historical development of thousands of years which is still strong enough to live and develop naturally in the future if only the fetters of the Diaspora are removed."

III

Was Ahad Ha'am right in his confidence in a continuity of generations over thousands of years? Did the Greeks, "liberated" in 1821, revive the spirit of ancient Greece in its homeland? Are nation and national language the source of creative ingenuity? Did Spinoza and Marx, Freud, Einstein, and Bergson contribute lastingly and validly to man's spiritual patrimony? Ahad Ha'am was too deeply a nationalist to imagine a creative or full life for the individual outside his rootedness in the traditions of his "blood"; like all nationalists looking to the past for inspiration, he was hopefully convinced that the Jewish center in Palestine would revive the prophetic spirit. He believed in the continuous reality of a Hebrew genius which has neither ceased to exist nor changed fundamentally but needs only revitalization to assume its high moral flight. In this faith he resembled Fichte, Mazzini, and Dostoevsky. Yet he was far less blinded than they by nationalist fervor. The clarity and probity of his mind made him see the danger to his hopes. He warned against them out of his deep faith.

In the first years of political Zionism he expressed the fear that Jews would imitate alien habits to prove they can be "normal" and "valiant" like others. "It may suffice to mention the saddening incident which happened recently in Vienna," he wrote in 1897, "when Zionist students went out to spread the Zionist gospel, in the German fashion, with fists and sticks. And the Zionist organ viewed this action sympathetically and for all its caution could not hide its pleasure about the valor of the Zionist fist." Ahad Ha'am was convinced that "long ago, in the days of the Prophets, we Jews learned to despise physical force and to respect only spiritual power." In it he saw the justification for the efforts to assure the survival and reflowering of Judaism.

In a famous essay, "The Transvaluation of All Values," he turned against the "young men" who under the influence of Nietzsche wished to "cure" the Jews by emancipating the physical life from its subservience to the limiting forces of the spirit.* They demanded

* Their leader was Micah Joseph Berdichevsky (1865-1921), a Hebrew writer of great originality who collected in eleven volumes the sagas and folk tales of the Jewish tradition. A similar tendency was represented in the early work of the Hebrew poet Saul Tschernichovsky (1875-1943), especially in his *Lenochach pessel Apollo* ("Before the Statue of Apollo"), where he powerfully contrasts the Judeo-Nazarene "spirit" with the Hellenic "flesh"; as Heine, Ibsen, and Nietzsche did earlier.

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that "the Book yield to the sword and the Prophets to the blond beast." It seemed incredible to Ahad Ha'am that the Jews, who had been taught by prophets and scribes to base their vitality on the conviction that they had to bear the yoke of the most exacting ethical duties, could suddenly transvalue all their values to become a tiny and negligible part in the world of the sword and of physical strength. But did not Ahad Ha'am overlook another and more "natural" trend in Jewish history represented by the conquerors of Canaan and by the Maccabees? Did the Jews not venerate the five sons of Mattathias, and would it not be easy to rekindle among them the memories of Masada and Bethar? Could we not expect that there would be "young men" who would regard the spirituality of the People of the Book as a degeneration forced upon the Jews by the circumstances of the Diaspora, who would follow their master Nietzsche in regarding the ethics in which Ahad Ha'am saw the meaning of Jewish history as the cunning subterfuge of the weak and anemic in the struggle for survival? And that many Jews, living in a nationalist age, would find them right?

The problem of the relationship between flesh and spirit occupied Ahad Ha'am a great deal. In an essay "Flesh and Spirit" which he wrote in 1904, he defined Judaism as equally remote from the materialism of the exaltation of the flesh and the ascetic longing away from the earth to heaven. He regarded both these attitudes as begotten by despair, by a sense of the emptiness of life. Judaism, on the other hand, gave meaning to life here on earth by emphasizing the individual as a part of the social body. "When the individual loves the community as himself, and identifies himself completely with its well-being, he has something to live for; he feels his personal hardships less keenly, because he knows the purpose for which he lives and suffers."*

But Ahad Ha'am was in no way satisfied with this simple nationalistic position. The shift of the center of life from the individual to the community did not in itself provide meaning and justification for the burden of individual life or for the continuous perpetuation of group existence. Life must serve a higher purpose than mere existence and growth and so must national life. Neither despising nor glorifying the flesh, true Judaism, according to Ahad Ha'am, believed in a harmony of the body and the spirit, but a harmony resulting from the penetration of the spiritual element into the very heart of the physical life, "till its cleansing and purifying influence makes the physical life itself, in its very detail, a part of the spiritual life. This union, so far from degrading the spirit, exalts the flesh, which is irradiated by the sanctity of the spirit; and through their joint life, each closely linked with and completing the other, man achieves the true purpose of his being."

IV

A SIMILAR relation between the flesh and the spirit must exist on the national level. In ancient Jewish history, the aristocracy and the priests saw the national purpose in a state that was prosperous, respected abroad, and secure against aggression. To the prophets, on the other hand, this was not enough: they insisted that national life could derive meaning and purpose only from the spirit, though they valued the existence of the state as the embodiment of the spiritual life. They demanded that the end should not be subordinated to the means, that the body should not ascend over the spirit. In their succession, the Pharisees, opposing the Zealots, cared for the state only for the sake of the national spirit. For it they abandoned Jerusalem and went to Yavneh.

The essence of Judaism—and that meant to Ahad Ha'am the peculiar character of Jewish ethics—was formulated by him in his famous criticism of Claude G. Montefiore's commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, in which the well-known leader of English Reform Judaism took an extreme stand. Against him the Hebrew writer maintained that the true spirit of Jewish ethics was irreconcilable with Christian ethics. The Jewish mind, according to Ahad Ha'am, is bent toward the abstract and the social; the teachings of the

* Ahad Ha'am, *Essays, Letters, Memoirs*, p. 120.

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Gospel, on the other hand, toward the personal and the individual. More important, however, was to him the difference with regard to the basis of morality. In Christianity it is subjective altruism; in Judaism, objective justice. Perfect morality from the Jewish point of view demands that men "feel even the slightest deviation from justice instantaneously, and with the certainty of intuition. Personal and social considerations will not affect them in the slightest degree; their instinct will judge every action with absolute impartiality, ignoring all human relations, and making no difference between the self and the other, between rich and poor." Justice demands that man should rise above his emotional inclinations and utilitarian considerations, for himself or for his group, to judge every situation according to objective truth. Judaism furnishes the fundamental principle which can help the still imperfect man to avoid weighting the scales to suit his ends; in Hillel's words: "Do not unto your neighbor what you would not have him do unto you."* Such a principle, Ahad Ha'am believed, is needed above all to keep within bounds that national egoism which he rightly regarded as a greater danger to mankind than individual egoism. Among the Zionists he was the first to perceive, realistically and ethically, the lasting importance for the Jews of the Arab problem in Palestine.

V

In their wishful ardor, Zionists had overlooked the existence of the Arabs in Palestine. To their eyes the land of their distant forefathers appeared empty, waiting for the return of the dispersed descendants, as if history had stood still for two thousand years. In his "Truth from Palestine" Ahad Ha'am pointed out in 1891 that it was difficult, except on sand dunes or stony hills, to find untilled soil in Palestine. "We think that the Arabs are all savages who live like animals and do not understand what is happening around them. This is, however, a great error." The Arabs, Ahad Ha'am was convinced, understood very well, and if they did not protest it was only because they did not yet see then in the Zionist activities a danger for their future. This situation had changed when Ahad Ha'am on his return from another visit to Palestine in 1912 published his "Balance Sheet." Then he wrote: "Many natives whose national consciousness has begun to grow since the Turkish revolution [1908] look askance—how could it be otherwise?—at selling land to 'strangers' and try hard to stop this evil. The Turkish government—whatever its opinion of our work be—cannot irritate the Arabs for our sake: that would make things too difficult for it."

In 1891 Ahad Ha'am warned that the settlers must under no circumstances arouse the wrath of the natives by ugly actions and must meet them in the friendly spirit of respect. "Yet what do our brethren do in Palestine? Just the very opposite! Serfs they were in the lands of the Diaspora and suddenly they find themselves in unrestricted freedom and this change has awakened in them an inclination to despotism. They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination."

Ahad Ha'am remained faithful to the end. Twenty years later, on July 9, 1911, he wrote from London† to Mr. Eisenstadt in Jaffa: "As to the war against the Jews in Palestine—I am a spectator from afar with an aching heart, particularly because of the want of insight and understanding shown on our side

* Altruism would tilt the scales to the side of the other and against the self, in the same way as the altruism of the Gospels favors the poor against the rich. The sense of justice demands objectivity as between rich and poor; neither to favor the rich as materialism does, nor the poor as compassionate sentiment demands. Justice does not differentiate between rich and poor, nor between the native and the alien. "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." (Lev. 19:33-34)

† In his last years Ahad Ha'am edited and published his letters, *Igeroth*, 6 vols. (Jerusalem, Jabneh, 1923-25), an important source for understanding his personality.

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to an extreme degree. As a matter of fact it was evident twenty years ago that the day would come when the Arabs would stand up against us." He complained bitterly that the Jews were unprepared because they had not learned the language or studied the spirit of the people of the land. The same lack of understanding he found in the boycott of Arab labor proclaimed by Jewish labor. In a letter from London, dated November 18, 1913, he wrote to Moshe Smelansky in Rehovot, protesting against the boycott of Arab labor: "Apart from the political danger, I can't put up with the idea that our brethren are morally capable of behaving in such a way to humans of another people, and unwittingly the thought comes to my mind: if it is so now, what will be our relation to the others if in truth we shall achieve at the end of times power in Eretz Israel? And if this be the 'Messiah': I do not wish to see his coming."

Ahad Ha'am returned to the Arab problem in another letter to Smelansky in February 1914. His friend had been attacked because he had drawn attention to the Arab problem. Ahad Ha'am tried to comfort him by pointing out that the Zionists had not yet awakened to reality. "Therefore they wax angry towards those who remind them that there is still another people in Eretz Israel that has been living there and does not intend at all to leave its place. In a future when this illusion will have been torn from their hearts and they will look with open eyes upon the reality as it is, they will certainly understand how important this question is and how great our duty to work for its solution."

In 1902 Ahad Ha'am had subjected Theodor Herzl's novel *Altneuland* to a devastating criticism. However, despite their bitter differences, the Hebraist, steeped in the tradition of his people, and the assimilated Central European Jew met in one decisive point. The Jewish state Herzl envisaged in *Altneuland* was full of thriving Arab cities and villages with a highly contented population that had profited and increased as the result of the coming of the new settlers, with whom they lived in mutual respect and harmony. Differing in origin and outlook, Ahad Ha'am and Herzl, the moralist and the political leader, could not envisage the dispossession of the Arab people and their homelessness. Such an event seemed to them not only ethically dubious but practically unwise because it would hinder the growth of an atmosphere of peace between Israel and its neighbors, which can be built only upon deeds and not upon words, upon compromise and not upon conquest.

VI

AHAD HA'AM died in Tel Aviv in 1927 after an illness of several years that had forced him into an almost complete retirement. How far has his nationalist philosophy stood up in the two decades which have passed since his death? Has he been proved wrong? He had been a 19th-century liberal and moralist whose mature mind was shaped much more by Mill and Gladstone than by the extremism and violence of Eastern and Central Europe. On May 19, 1914, when the Hebrew teachers in Palestine proclaimed their boycott against a technical school employing a "foreign" language of instruction, Ahad Ha'am with all his love for Hebrew protested: "I am in general absolutely opposed to all forms of boycott. Even in childhood I detested the Jerusalem *herem* [religious boycott], and this feeling has remained in my heart to this day, even if the boycott emanates from the Teachers' Union. Call it *herem* or call it boycott, I loathe it. If I were in Palestine, I would fight this loathsome practice with all my might. I do not care if they call me reactionary, or even traitor, what was ugly in my eyes thirty years ago remains ugly now."

The catastrophe of World War I upset him deeply. He found all his moral values threatened. His physical distress increased his moral anxieties. From Tel Aviv he wrote on March 28, 1923, to Dubnow in Berlin: "I am broken, shattered, utterly and incurably depressed. I am surrounded by intimate and devoted friends; respect and affection are shown me on every hand; my children live near me; and I now have time for study and

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for rest. And all this in Palestine, which has been my dream for years and years. And in the midst of all these blessings, I long for—London! Literally, for the dark city in which I spent so many hours without light or air, for the choking fog. . . ." But even in his darkest moods he could not foresee the unexpected turn history was soon to take.

Liberals have been poorly prepared for the irruption into history of the demoniac and of mass fury. The new forms of anti-Semitism, not in backward Russia or Rumania but in Germany, a *Rechtsstaat,* the inspiration of Jewish enlightenment, the home of Lessing, Kant, and Schiller, came as an immense shock. The strong anti-Western and anti-Enlightenment trends in modern Germany had been disregarded. An oversimplified optimism denied the demoniac element in man and history, even where subterranean traditions fertilized the soil for it. Yet this confident liberalism may be far less dangerous for the future of mankind than the defeatist fatalism which would accept the demoniac as a norm and deny the moral and humane foundation on which alone national life and culture can be secure. Ahad Ha'am remained intensely conscious of the validity of these foundations.

When Ahad Ha'am died it seemed probable that the National Home growing up in Palestine under the protection of the Balfour Declaration would realize his vision of a spiritual center. The pseudo-messianic hopes of a vast mass immigration that dominated Zionist thought after the Balfour Declaration of 1917 were quickly disappointed by the limitations which the feelings of Diaspora Jewry and the economic and political realities of Palestine imposed. The Balfour Declaration had taken the realities of Palestine into consideration. Ahad Ha'am himself saw them clearly and stressed them in an introduction which he wrote in 1920 for a new edition of *Al Parashat D'rakhim.** A devoted friend of Zionism, Sir Herbert (now Viscount) Samuel, said as High Commissioner of Palestine on June 3, 1921 that the Balfour Declaration meant "that the Jews, a people who are scattered throughout the world, but whose hearts are always turned to Palestine, should be enabled to find their home, and that some amongst them should come to Palestine in order to help to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants. For the British Government, the trustee for the happiness of the people of Palestine, would never impose upon them a policy which that people had reason to think contrary to their interests." Even more in the sense of Ahad Ha'am's policy was the official statement of British policy of June 3, 1922, which was accepted by the Zionists as a foundation of their activities. It defined the National Home not as "the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become the center in which the Jewish people as a whole may take an interest and a pride. That this community should have the best prospect of free development and provide a full opportunity for the Jewish people to display its capacities, it is essential that it should know that it is in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance." For that reason it must be internationally guaranteed and recognized to rest upon ancient historic connection.

IN THE above-mentioned introduction Ahad Ha'am deprecated the exaggerated Zionist hopes which were countered by similar Arab fears. "The Arab people regarded by us as nonexistent ever since the beginning of the colonization of Palestine, heard [these exaggerated hopes] and believed that the Jews were coming to drive them from their soil and deal with them at their own will." Such a Jewish attitude seemed to Ahad Ha'am unthinkable. Nor did the immigration in the first ten years bear out the hopes or fears. From 1920 to 1929 the yearly net immigration amounted to 7,700, the excess of Jewish birth over death to 3,500, so that the Jewish population gained by about 11,000 yearly, while the settled Arab population, not

* See "Build Palestine on Realities," in COMMENTARY, April 1946.

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counting the Bedouins, grew by natural increase at the rate of 16,000 yearly. Thus everything pointed to the possibility of a limitation of hopes and fears which would make probable a peaceful cohabitation and a binational state with a thriving Jewish community living there its own cultural life in autonomy and as of right. Even after 1933, when everybody with a "capital" of $5,000 could freely immigrate into Palestine and when the American quotas were wide open, relatively very few Jews left their European fatherlands. Ahad Ha'am's vision of the future seemed confirmed by the facts.

The excesses of Hitlerism and the tragedy of World War II, unforeseen by Ahad Ha'am, by liberal opinion, and by the framers of the Balfour Declaration, changed all this. Even in its defeat, Hitlerism triumphed in some of its aspects, in its arrogant cutting of the deep roots which Jews had struck during two thousand years in Europe, in its emphasis upon "blood" as the determinant factor in man's spiritual loyalty. Ahad Ha'am had rejected a gathering-in of all Jews in Palestine as an answer to anti-Semitism. He had distrusted the pseudo-messianic fervor which he feared would end in disillusionment and spiritual disintegration.

Of the new national mood he had some intimation while he lived in Tel Aviv. One of his last public utterances was an almost pathetic and prophetic protest. It was then rumored that as an act of vengeance for Arab attacks, and as a warning, Jews had killed an Arab child. "What should we say if this is really true? My God, is *this* the end? Is *this* the goal for which our ancestors have striven and for whose sake all generations suffered? Is this the dream of our return to Zion, that we come to Zion and stain its soil with innocent blood? It has been an axiom in my eyes that the people will sacrifice its money for the sake of a state, but never its prophets. And now God has afflicted me in that I have to live and have to see with my own eyes that I have apparently erred therein too. Even now the people does not give its money for the upbuilding of the national home. Instead, there is a growing inclination to sacrifice its prophets on the altar of the national rebirth, to sacrifice the great moral principles for the sake of which our people lives, for the sake of which it has suffered, and for the sake of which alone it is worthwhile to return to the land. For without them, my God, what are we and what is our future life in this land that we bring all the innumerable sacrifices, without which the land cannot be rebuilt. Do we really do it to add a small people of new Levantines in a corner of the Orient, who will vie with other Levantines in shedding blood, in vengeance and wrath? If this be the Messiah, then I don't wish to see his coming."

AHAD HA'AM'S rank and right as a Jewish nationalist might be disputed. He might have felt today even lonelier among the Zionists than he did during his lifetime. But there cannot be any doubt that this little-known Hebrew writer belongs in the age of nationalism to the small company of men of all tongues who in their unsparing search for truth and in the sobriety of their moral realism are the hope of the future. Perhaps none has expressed their attitude better than he did as far back as 1907 when few other men recognized the danger signals as clearly as he did.

He wrote then a short essay, "In the Footsteps of the Messiah, Impudence Will Grow." There he spoke of the new dogmatic enthusiasts, socialists or nationalists, who were convinced that they knew the way to "redemption." In their arrogant certitude, they appeared to him happy. "But how hard is life in such an age for one who is not of their group and who cannot go with closed eyes in the footsteps of this or that Messiah; for one who does not hear the voice announcing redemption [*geulah*], neither for the immediate nor for the more distant future, neither for his generation nor for the time when his grandchildren will be buried; one for whom truth and knowledge and reason remain mighty gods standing above all the camps and judging them all impartially, and are not servants of a Messiah to herald him as his standard-bearers and trumpeters."

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1930: THE YEAR THAT WAS NEW YEAR'S EVE

The Great Binge and Its Leftist Aftermath

MALCOLM COWLEY

IN THE literary world as in the country at large, 1930 was the strangest year of the century. It was the beginning of an age and the end of an age and the country was living as if by two calendars: one was turned to March and the other to December. The jazz age was ending but it wasn't tapering off; having survived the Wall Street crash it was rising to new heights of self-destructive hilarity. When we think of a song, a story, or an escapade that "expressed the spirit of the 1920's," the chances are that it was written or happened in the year 1930. Meanwhile the new world of the depression, whose first citizens were displaced farmers and factory workers, was creeping in from the industrial suburbs and was taking over the business section. The year went forward as if on two levels, an upper level of crazy ostentation and a lower level of hunger and protest. At the end of the year the levels met, like two slopes in a mine.

Strange as it was in the end, the year began like any other. During the spring Wall Street recovered from its autumn panic and many stocks climbed above their 1928 levels, although they slumped again in May and June. Stock dividends were higher than ever before. Unemployment was increasing rapidly, but that was still a matter of argument and statistics, not of direct experience for the middle classes; even if they lost their jobs they were confident of finding others, as always in the past. The big newspaper story was prohibition and the lawlessness growing out of it. After that came other issues like the tariff debate that lasted all spring, the naval conference in London during the summer, the visit of Ramsay MacDonald to Mr. Hoover's Rapidan camp, and the great drought in the upper South, extending from Maryland into Oklahoma. Newspapers were trying to stop the business decline by banishing it to their inside pages, but even in private conversations it was not yet the principal topic. "After a 3,500-mile journey through the Middle West," Bruce Bliven reported in the *New Republic*, "I feel able to report with some confidence for the benefit of other parts of this gr-r-reat country what that important section is thinking about. It is thinking about Midget, alias Tom Thumb, alias Peewee, alias Tiny, golf."

While midget golf courses flourished in every vacant lot and in many showrooms vacated by jewelry stores and stock-selling outfits, life for the writers of the country went on as usual. In May and June there was the same exodus from the big cities toward all the countrysides where writers and painters gathered – Woodstock, the Cape, the Vineyard, Bucks County, and upper Connecticut. All summer there were the same shipboard parties for rich friends making another trip to Europe; in fact there would be more American tourists in France that year than at any time during the roaring 20's. In the fall there were the same

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IN RETROSPECT, the year 1930 seems a watershed, separating the brimming extravagance of the 20's from the grim realism of the 30's. MALCOLM COWLEY here attempts to capture the mood of that year and to describe how the boisterous echoes of a dying decade merged into the cacophony of the new-born era—an era of political ferment whose effects are still written large on present-day American society and culture. Mr. Cowley, one of America's foremost literary critics, has edited selections from Hemingway, Faulkner, and Hawthorne for the Viking Portable Library. From 1929 to 1941 he was associate editor of the *New Republic*. The present article is adapted from a new concluding chapter to a revised edition of his book *Exile's Return* (originally published in 1934), which will be brought out this month by Viking Press.

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reunions in New York and the same round of drinking and dancing parties and publishers' teas. Liquor was cheaper than at any time since 1919: in the "cordial shops" to be found all over Manhattan four bottles of gin with Gordon labels sold for five dollars, and grain alcohol, 190 proof, was six or eight dollars a gallon. The punch was stronger at publishers' teas, but otherwise they were a little less sumptuous and they were also less frequent; books weren't selling well and advances were harder to get. Nothing else seemed to have changed.

YET even in the literary world, which was separate from the business world but not so completely divorced from it as in later years, there were signs that an age was ending. The 1920's had been an era of pretty good feeling among writers. Now suddenly they began to quarrel, not merely about personal questions but about the meaning of literature and its relation to life. A battle that lasted all year was about the New Humanism expounded by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. It was different from the guerrilla warfare and banditry of the 1920's, being on a larger scale, with writers of many groups and two or three literary generations involved on both sides. The issues were confused, as might have been expected, but it was clear that they involved not only personal and aesthetic but also moral questions, such as the fashion in which writers should live and their relationship to society. There were overtones of politics, rising from the fact that most of the Humanists were conservative while all the radicals were anti-Humanist. There was the suggestion that the 1920's were a definite period in literature and life and that their principal efforts might have been mistaken. Finally there was an unfamiliar note of acerbity in the discussion. Allen Tate had written an essay against Humanism for the *Hound and Horn*. In the January 1930 issue of the *Bookman* one of the Humanists answered him, partly with logic and partly with invective. "Not hastily or willingly," he accused Tate of "deliberate misrepresentation," of "puerile inconsequence," of impudence that "could no further go"; and he ended unsmilingly by calling him "a mere talking mole! . . . A fellow so utterly nothing as he knows not what he would be." Such language had seldom been used in the late 1920's, but within two or three years it would seem restrained.

There were other signs of change in the literary world, although it would be hard to suggest them by quotations or reduce them to statistics. As I look back on the year 1930 it seems to me that there were never so many shifts in the personal relations of people one knew well or faintly or by reputation. Marriages that had endured all through the 1920's, though both partners had been indifferent to each other and in some cases notoriously unfaithful, now ended in sudden quarrels and separations. Old love affairs ended that had seemed as respectable as marriages. Friendships were broken off. People could no longer endure the little hypocrisies that had kept their relations stable; they had to set everything straight, like men preparing for death.

There seemed to be more drinking than before, in literary and business circles; at least it was noisier and more public. It was a different sort of drinking, with more desperation in the mood behind it. People no longer drank to have a good time or as an excuse for doing silly and amusing things that they could talk about afterward; they drank from habit, or to get away from boredom, or because they had a physiological need for alcohol. There was as much horseplay and laughter as before, but it was strained and at last hysterical; one began to notice shaking hands and white faces. The epidemic of nervous breakdowns was not confined to one's friends: it seems to me now that every time I study the life of a recent literary figure—Anderson, Lewis, Fitzgerald, Hart Crane, it doesn't matter who—I learn that the figure or his wife or both of them had breakdowns in 1930. If they recovered they wanted to lead completely new lives. Psychoanalysts were busy

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when every other profession except that of social service was losing its clients. One friend who was being analyzed told me that the doctor's office was crowded with people he knew. "Why," he said, "it was like a publisher's tea."

TO UNDERSTAND what was happening in the literary world and elsewhere one has to go back to the last years of the Coolidge era. By 1927 the big boom was under way and a great many prosperous Americans had started a frantic search for enjoyment that would afterwards be pictured as a sort of national orgy. It wasn't that at all, having been confined to groups and classes in the nation. Working-class families simply hadn't money enough to be affected by it, except insofar as they went into debt for the same conveniences that all their neighbors were buying, or were scandalized by the stories that their children brought home from high school. Most of the business-class families lived very much as before, while yielding in minor ways to the new fashions: for example many of them now played golf instead of going to church on Sunday morning and more of them had begun serving cocktails to their dinner guests. But every city down to the smallest had its "fast set" that was gossiped about and a little envied and finally imitated by most of the other sets. When Robert and Helen Lynd made their second survey of Middletown, in the 1930's, a local businessman told them what had happened in that city of fifty thousand average people:

"Drinking increased here markedly in '27 and '28," he said. ". . . In the winter of '29-'30 and '30-'31 things were roaring here. There was much drunkenness—people holding those bathtub gin parties. There was a great increase in women's drinking and drunkenness. And there was a lot of sleeping around by married people and a number of divorces resulted." The same report could have been made from other cities all over the country. It was actually made in scores of the novels written during the early 1930's and it helps to explain the mood of revulsion and repentance that many of them express. The novels make one feel that the depression, besides being economic, was a sort of liturgical response to what had gone before. It was part of a sacramental drama that answered the human need for punishment after pleasure.

Many of the younger American writers had tried to stand apart from the beginning of the drama. *Act I. Scene I. A penthouse in the East 70's. Well-dressed people are talking confusedly in front of a large window that gives a view of the East River. Enter a butler bearing a tray of cocktails*—that wasn't their scene or their life. In the Coolidge era the country was rich but they were poor, and they were proud of living in tenements or along back roads in farmhouses renting for ten dollars a month. They were glad to eat plain food, dress in khaki or gingham, and drive the oldest Fords that would almost hold together, so long as not spending money helped them to keep their independence. Their excuse for going to Europe was that living was cheaper there. "My work's the important thing," they all said a little solemnly. But the boom continued and one by one they were drawn into the general frenzy. Sometimes it was because a novel of theirs had been chosen by a book club, ballyhooed into the best-seller lists and bought by the movies, suddenly giving its author more money than he knew what to do with. Sometimes it was because, in the course of their travels, they met wealthier and idler Americans in Brittany or on the Riviera and imperceptibly adopted their standards. More frequently it was because of rich dilettantes who hoped to find some vigor or vision or purpose among writers and painters that they had missed among moneyed people, and now tried to buy themselves into the world of art by giving big parties. Most often it was the simple contagion of bad examples.

Considering that writers of what was then the younger generation had trained themselves to question all previously accepted standards of conduct, there seemed to be no reason why they should now re-

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fuse to have a good time. Soon, by accepting too many well-meant invitations, they found themselves involved in the worst features of the society they had affected to despise. Their rather Puritan attitude toward art itself, and toward the need for working every morning on their new books, kept them somewhat more levelheaded than the others; but it sometimes happened that their work failed them, their books stopped in the middle, and then they were in danger of going to pieces. By the autumn of 1930 that had become a general complaint.

In a little-known short story by Edmund Wilson, "What to Do Till the Doctor Comes," the mood of the time is expressed in terms of the grotesque and hysterical. The story deals with a group of characters in the semi-literary, hard-drinking set, busy telling funny stories and making love in taxicabs, but unspeakably bored in the midst of their animation and each feeling an utter contempt for himself and all the others. After an evening spent in half a dozen strange apartments the narrator leaves in a taxi with someone else's wife. "There was a sudden shattering crash, and great glass splinters fell out of the window. We saw a group of men milling around and somebody stopped the cab. It was the taxi strike. They made us get out. Lou gave them a piece of her mind." And then, the narrator continues:

"We were running down and rather glum, so we went into a little downtown bar that had funny blue lights in the windows. Lou told me that Will had a mistress and that he hadn't lived at home for four years, and that the mistress had been a friend of the children's nurse, and that she didn't think he even liked the mistress, and that every time he decided to commit suicide she had to go and quiet him down, and that the children had gotten to loathe him, and that she was getting cross with the children, and that she had never taken a lover because the only man she liked was in Seattle. She wept in the most horrible way."

Those were the sort of confidences that were being made late at night in downtown speakeasies. The recklessness of the 1920's, which had once seemed youthful and appealing, was dying away into nervous tears and drunken exasperation. There was the atmosphere of a party that had gone on too long, that had started with cocktails and spirited gossip, had continued through a big disorganized dinner in an Italian backyard restaurant, then adjourned to somebody's apartment, where everything went well enough for a time—but nobody seemed to go home, everybody was getting tired and pasty-faced, and the young woman who used to be so funny after the third drink was sobbing and threatening to throw herself out of the window. The party would have ended anyhow; it couldn't go on forever; but the depression was like a crash of breaking glass that let in the cold night air.

BY AUTUMN the breadlines in more than one American city had spread from the local skidrow into the district of chromium-fronted shops. The Communists were demanding relief for the unemployed and the police were smashing their demonstrations; everywhere one heard stories of bystanders, perfectly nice people, who were kicked or clubbed because they weren't wearing hats and hence were mistaken for radicals. The National Apple Sellers' Association had thought of a new way to get rid of its surplus, by selling it to the unemployed on credit at wholesale prices. When the weather turned colder there were men without overcoats shivering on every street corner, not only selling apples but also, in effect, crying out to passers-by that they were penniless, willing to work, and could find no jobs. The rich merchants had become disturbed; they were organizing charity drives and in a few cases were permitting the homeless to take shelter in their great empty warehouses.

Stocks were falling again, after having risen during the summer. This time their decline was "orderly," but that made the situation no less dangerous for the corporations that had borrowed money against them

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and the banks that held them as security. Caldwell and Company, of Nashville, went bankrupt on November 14, 1930. It was one of the largest investment houses in the South, with dozens of affiliates, and its failure caused the closing of banks in half a dozen states. Soon afterward Bankers Trust, of Philadelphia, closed its doors and those of its twenty-one branches. When the Bank of the United States went under, on December 11, it was described by the New York *Times* as "the largest bank in the United States ever to suspend payments"; it had fifty-nine branches and more than four hundred thousand depositors. People began to say that the whole structure of American finance might crash to the ground. They looked for explanations and found them in books; even F. Scott Fitzgerald was reading Marx. Magazines were suspending publication and business houses were planning to reduce their payrolls by 50 per cent after the first of the year. A new age would begin then, and writers were contemplating the possibility that they might be called upon to play a new part in it.

MEANWHILE the round of parties continued, and those given to celebrate the New Year's Eve of 1930-31 were the biggest and noisiest of all. There were so many parties that people got invitations to six or eight of them and accepted all the invitations and went instead to parties to which they hadn't been asked. They traveled about the city in caravans of taxicabs, then suddenly irrupted into a house that was strange to most of them, in a mass attack of rainbow silks and uniform white shirt fronts. Glasses ran out and the hostess brought paper cups that dripped on the rugs. Everybody was laughing and screeching together: the friends and strangers and enemies, the cuckolds and the cuckolders, the wives and mistresses and the wives' girl friends. Somebody was locked in the bathroom and somebody else was pounding at the bathroom door. In the hall bedroom a girl with an excessively innocent look was explaining to her lover why she had left him. "I love Harry," she said, "and it doesn't matter if he loves his wife more than me, I'll live with him until he sends for her."—"Maybe I'd better make time with his wife," the deserted lover said. Back in the living room the punch bowl was empty except for the cigarette stubs that floated in a quart of pinkish liquor. The women had disappeared into a bedroom and were shrieking as they tried to pull their coats from under the girl who had passed out on the bed. "Does anybody know who she is?" a woman asked. Suddenly the crowd was gone, rushing off to another house in a great undisciplined body, while the host and hostess were left behind to take care of the drunken girl—or perhaps they forgot about her and, with the few remaining guests, piled into other taxicabs and joined the caravan. Curious things happened that night, quarrels of principle and declarations of eternal faith that people overheard in the confusion and didn't remember until long afterward. But I was most impressed by the story of a friend, who told me that after attending four successive parties he found himself in a sub-cellar joint in Harlem. The room was smoky and sweaty; all the lights were tinted red or green and, as the smoke drifted across them, nothing had its own shape or color; the cellar was like somebody's crazy vision of Hell; it was as if he were caught there and condemned to live in a nightmare. At last he broke the spell and, climbing to the street, found that it was bathed in harsh winter sunlight, ugly and clear and somehow reassuring. An ash-colored woman was hunting for scraps in a garbage can.

"This is the new year," he told me that he said. "This is my world now."

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THE STRAW HAT

A Story

ELIOT L. WAGNER

DEBORAH said to her brother, who remained alone with her at the long dinner table after her son-in-law and daughter had gone to their own room, "Some performance, eh?"

Ben raised his brows noncommittally. Although Deborah hadn't enjoyed her meal, he had enjoyed his—all of it: the chicken à la king; the beefsteak; the rosy still Burgundy; the steaming, aromatic demitasse. He could see from where he sat the open windows of the adjacent living room, and was in fact gazing at the leafy Riverdale sidewalk and the house across the street, nestled in an enshadowed declivity.

Quite different was the view from Ben's apartment, also in the Bronx, but three miles south: rooftops, the A&P where 167th Street sloped eastward, and at night a towering, luminous white chimney in the shape of a milk bottle, which crowned a milk terminal on Webster Avenue.

"In-laws," Ben judiciously replied, "simply are not created to live together."

Deborah sniffed. "There are in-laws and in-laws," she said, paraphrasing what her son-in-law had told Ben in an aside before dinner had started.

Ben smiled. She was not very happy, Deborah, in spite of her money, her success. Her pale, gray eyes, which formerly had been strong, were now petulant merely. She was forty-six, her head was graying, and the skin under her jaw beginning to sag badly.

Her daughter's husband was the son of an unsuccessful optometrist in the southeast Bronx, near St. Mary's Park. His name, like his son's, was Peter Wenzel. They were Gentiles. The younger Wenzel was an intellectual, a critic who cultivated the editors of the worst-paying periodicals in America. Peter was no angel, Ben knew, but Deborah had literally asked for the situation, since she had convinced everyone that living in a furnished room was out of the question for Marion, her daughter. And so they all lived together, and quarreled.

Wenzel answered Deborah's demands with every possible stinging tactic. Deborah requested him to wear a tie and jacket to dinner. He came down in his army pants, a grimy sweatshirt partially covered by an ascot, and a tan, hand-stitched sport jacket with very wide lapels. His black hair was cut short, and his face was handsome, with brown, limpid eyes, a delicately modeled nose, curving lips, and a strong jaw, jutting slightly but not too much. Poor, pale, harried Marion melted almost into prettiness when she looked at him.

IN ADDITION to his costume, he had offended tonight by taking his shower in the wrong stall. He had chosen the one that was leaking, though Deborah swore she had begged him not to. Peter shrugged and ate and answered that she had said no such thing. The maid had to place an empty pail in the living room, on the rich, pastel blue carpeting. During the frequent silences of the meal they listened to the dripping of the water from upstairs. Deborah from time to time leaped up and ran into the other room, mistakenly thinking there was an overflow. Fringing the bottom of the pail was the dark blot of the original wetting.

Ben's presence had been at first quieting to Deborah. By a series of nods, glances, and headshakes she directed him to witness

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THIS is the third of ELIOT L. WAGNER's short stories to appear in COMMENTARY; the two earlier stories were "In Our Infancy" (January 1947) and "Golden Days" (May 1949). Mr. Wagner has also published stories in *Crisis*, *Opinion*, and *Antioch Review*.

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the evidence of her suffering. But toward the end of the meal she lost her self-restraint.

"You didn't have to worry *which* shower you were going to use down at St. Mary's Park. You were lucky if you had warm water for your Saturday night bath, let alone a choice of showers—"

To which Peter replied, "My father is a hard-working man, and if his honest living wasn't quite enough to live on, it was no fault of his or mine."

Deborah exclaimed, "Now the father is dragged into it!"

Thus the wrangling persisted.

Ben, who up to now had been amused by the anticipation of retailing Deborah's plight to the poor relations, suddenly became peeved. Why should she complain to him, who had nothing? He could not even call himself a failure, since failing implied an objective. What had his goal ever been? All right, in his boyhood people told him he had a fine tenor voice that should be trained. But he had used it only at parties before his marriage to Edna, and in the tub afterwards. Now, Edna was dead; at forty-five, with a shining scalp fringed above the ears with hair, a hooked nose, and a shelf of a jaw, there was nothing to sing about. Why, with Debbie's money, with *part* of it—

"Debbie," he suggested drily, "why don't you buy them an apartment or a house, and kiss them goodbye?"

She twisted her neck, and tilted her head to one side. "Right away! What am I, his gold mine?"

Ben shrugged, but she ignored the gesture and went on, "He has it too good, she too—both of them. They don't know what it is to struggle. So he *was* in the army. Ten million others were too. It would have been better if he hadn't been in the army, the smiling lieutenant. She had to see him in uniform!"

HER diatribe lapsed as the maid came to clear the table. Deborah led the way to the living room, and sat down on the couch. Ben, desiring not to lose the suburban view, took one of the straight chairs facing it; but he loved to slouch, to lie down, if possible, after a heavy meal. The chair was exquisite, and uncomfortable. He moved to the couch beside her, adjusted a cushion, and leaned back. Gently water dripped from the splotched plaster overhead into the bucket in the middle of the floor. He smiled quietly, and repressed the smile as Deborah glanced from the bucket to him.

"Go ahead, laugh," she snapped. "It's hilarious . . . . My God! The spoiled brats! I remember when I was nine years old, living in a hovel on the East Side, and going to a Poor School that was run, mind you, by the Lutheran church, I—" she tapped her index finger half a dozen times against her chest just below the shoulder "—a Jewish girl, because my parents needed the clothing they handed out! And God knows that I consider myself a Jew, and what it must have meant to me to go to a place like that—"

Ben, who of course had been there too, leaned forward to protest. But he saw her eyes stare past him dreamily, not seeing him at all. He said nothing.

"There was a time, I remember, when everybody was wearing straw hats with artificial flowers. Oh, how I was dying for one, how I wanted a straw hat myself! My mother didn't have the quarter to go to a pushcart and buy one. And then, like a miracle, in one of the clothing handouts, there was a straw hat! It wasn't trimmed, but I got flowers for it somehow, and Mama sewed them on. And I was happy, damn happy, let me tell the world! And they, with all this . . . they complain!"

She turned once more to Ben, and generalized on the shortcomings of the modern generation. Ben was pained. A vague nostalgia had crept into him and twisted his mouth into a little, sad smile. He kept nodding, and from time to time murmured "yes, yes, yes," but it was his turn to retreat into himself, and he didn't really hear what she was saying.

Before Ben left, Peter appeared and offered explanations, no doubt prompted by Marion, who did not come down. The explanations were pithy, cogent, and not listened to. They

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didn't quite constitute an apology, as was at once apparent to Deborah. Since she knew that she nevertheless would have to accept them as such, she countered with reproaches, including her anecdote about the straw hat. It touched Peter not at all, and served only to increase Ben's silly longing for his childhood.

When the time to go arrived, instead of waiting for a bus to the subway station, he walked through the fragrant streets, past the private homes glowing warmly behind their neat lawns and gardens. Leaves rustled, and their fluttering shadows were cast underfoot by the gleaming lamplights.

AVENUE C and the Poor School had been different: drab in retrospect, hateful really. But they covered what he always thought had been the best period of his life, the time before the beginning of hopes, and consequently, of disillusion. He was on the periphery of everything now; at his age, moving closer to the periphery of life itself. Then, he had been in its very center.

It was wrong, of course, not to enjoy the present, to be living in the past. He dutifully paused, looked down the shadowy street, and inhaled, filling his chest with green-smelling air. Then he walked along, doing again what it was wrong to do.

He had to laugh. What was there to remember?—the kid upstairs who used to take him to the roof and beat him up every day? his father proudly leading the family up five steep flights to the newly found flat on Avenue C, and panting, "You see? A toilet, right inside here"? or the Poor School?

There was nothing, except the feeling that once there had been a little boy named Ben Eisenberg, and that the little boy had been gone for a long, long time.

But no, there *were* memories, memories of Debbie and her straw hat. He snickered, and thought, "I ate her meal. Now I'm digesting her past."

The Poor School.

Going there had been Deborah's idea. She had heard from kids on the block that at that school they gave you hot soup for lunch, and bread and honey. At the public school they gave you nothing. When it was time for her to go to school, she told Mama and Papa she was going to the Poor School. She was a short, thin child, with black hair, and a pale face colorless except for her eyes: they were narrow, gray, and imperious from the beginning. She had her way almost always with her mother, a stout, amiable, slow-moving woman who somehow raised a family of five.

But Papa had something to do with her going also. If it had mattered to Papa that the school was in a building connected to the back of a Lutheran church, Deborah would not have been permitted to go.

Papa didn't care. He had had the Bible and the Laws beaten into him by a teacher in the old country, and when he was old enough to make his own decisions, he decided that the Law and the observances didn't matter to him. He was neither for nor against them, and, if pressed, was willing to affirm a belief in God. What interested him was making a living, which was hard, and getting his brother David to accept him as a partner in the clothing factory where he worked, which was harder.

Deborah made her defiant request, Mama raised her brows and looked a little shocked, and Papa said, "Let her go. If they can convert this bargain, they're welcome to her—" Then he smiled, and rumpled Deborah's hair to take the edge off his words. But the smile and the rumpling were an afterthought, and Deborah drew away, ran into her room, and slammed the door.

Papa, who was sitting in the living room on the green, button-studded couch from the top of which peeked some gray matting and coil, shrugged. He stared thoughtfully at the children's underwear and socks hanging to dry on some twine that Mama had strung across the room. He stared at Ben, who was still a year too young for school, and at Mama, who was clucking to herself and shaking her head while making desultory swipes, in an effort to clean up, at the litter cluttering the room.

"Listen," said Papa, in self-justification,

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"that Poor School was here a long time before the Jews came to the East Side. If they're willing to feed Jewish children bread and honey, I won't stand in their way."

BEN was very interested, though a little puzzled, and he wanted to hear more about it. But it had been dark for some time, and he yawned. As he feared, Papa turned to him and demanded, "What are *you* doing up so late?"

"I was waiting for you, Papa."

Papa stretched out his arms, and took Ben on his lap. He kissed Ben and, stroking his hair, began to tell Mama a story about a different child.

"You remember about that boy we have pulling threads in the shop, Amedeo—his name means he loves God, or God loves him, I don't know which, my guess is the first . . . . Anyway, tonight I had an argument with Dave over him."

"Must you fight with him so much?" Mama protested mildly.

Papa grinned, the skin of his lean face stretching and wrinkling, and his wide mouth becoming still wider under his bony, twisted nose.

"I'll fight, and he'll listen. Without me, he can close up his factory. All day long, 'Nat, tell me this,' or 'Nat, what do you think about that?' I don't have to take any nonsense from my brother Dave. . . . Well, it's Friday night, the Sabbath, if you like. All the men except me and Dave go home before sundown. And it's the first Friday for this boy, this child. How old can he be, twelve? At the outside. I told Dave right away, it's a crime to hire a baby when you can get a man to do the work. But no, he's got to save a dollar. All right. We're alone, the three of us, and Amedeo is watching Dave for the word 'Go home.' He's sitting there, stooped over, ready to fall off the chair he's so tired. Dave stands with that big fat back of his to the boy. So finally I said, 'Amedeo, go home.' The boy rushes out, and Dave turns pink, red, white—all colors. 'Who are you to tell him when to go home?' he asks me. 'You're worried he might be late to synagogue? Ha, look at this. . . .'"

Ben had closed his eyes for a minute. He was not asleep. He was listening to the story, but Papa's voice had become mixed with the wind moaning outside and he saw Debbie bend over the blue-white snow covering the gutter and make a snowball and draw her arm back to throw it at him. . . . He started, opened his eyes, closed them, and opened them again.

"Go," Papa said gently, "get undressed, Benny."

Ben slipped to his feet, and went unsteadily to the cubbyhole of a room he shared with Deborah. She was on her cot, already asleep, or pretending to be. His cot was so close to hers that he had to climb in over the front end.

Ben took off his clothing, listening to Papa.

"'. . . my advice on all of the other things!' I said to him. 'All right, all right, don't excite yourself,' he tells me, 'but it's still my business. Let me run it a little bit.' 'Listen,' I tell him, 'you can run it all. I'm tired of sitting here and running it for you on an operator's wages. I'm getting out.' He grabs my sleeve, like a tramp begging for a nickel. 'Wait,' he begs me, 'wait. Another three months to develop the capital. After all, capital you're not bringing in.' So I said, 'Three months, as I'm your brother, and not a day more.'"

Ben stretched out in his underwear, and sighed. In the silence, the gas jet of the living room sighed in reply. Deborah breathed softly. Mama still moved around, picking up things. All the sounds were comforting. He sighed again. Papa said, "It's worth waiting, even six months. Each of us alone is nothing. Together, we'll get rich. . . . How'd you like to live uptown, eh, Hannah?" And then Mama sighed. Ben had a quick vision of a big house, standing alone, at the border of Central Park. Papa had once taken them uptown to the zoo and Ben had seen the house and now they were going to move uptown and live there and he would go to the zoo every day. . . .

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DEBORAH went to the Poor School, and liked it so well that she began attending Sunday school also. She would get up very early on Sunday, and would start out a few minutes after Papa left for work.

In addition to illustrations of the teachings of Jesus, the rector's assistant would give the children fruit. Deborah would hide in the entrance of a tenement adjoining the school, devour her apple or orange, and go home. Nobody knew.

But one snowy morning, when huge, feathery wafers were drifting from the gray sky and blanketing the streets and rooftops, she burst out of the flat too soon, and, without seeing Papa, passed him in the street. He followed her through the slush of Avenue C, and into Seventh Street, where stood the church, a narrow, red-brick building with an alley on either side leading to the school in back of it.

When she reached the steps leading down to the church basement, he called her. She turned slowly, stoop-shouldered in her worn, green coat, her shoes caked with snow. He waited, and when she came to him, he said, "What are you doing here?"

She told him, sullenly.

"I don't need you in any Sunday school," he said. "Get home."

She fixed her eyes stubbornly on him, and said, "Why?"

"Because you're a Jew."

"I'm not a Jew during the week. Why do I have to be one on Sunday?"

"All right. You're finished with that school. All through, you understand?"

"No, Papa, please!" She touched his sleeve. "No! . . . I'll go home, Papa!"

And she went home.

Shortly afterward, she brought home some clothing that the school had donated. There were ladies' dresses, and a pair of shoes for Papa. The dresses didn't fit Mama, and while the shoes were Papa's size, he was unwilling to wear them. "The Lutheran shoes pinch a little on the left foot," he explained offhandedly to Deborah.

She was furious. She took one of the shoes and flung it across the room and into the kitchen, where it hit the kerosene stove and fell with a thud to the floor. She lifted the other one, but Papa seized her arm and shook the shoe out of her hand.

"What is this!" he exclaimed. "Who do you think you are, madam?"

Deborah burst into tears, sobbing, "Did you think I liked to bring that stuff home, with the kids from the public school pointing at us and yelling 'Charity! Charity!' I wish I was a boy so I could throw rocks at them like the boys did—"

She gasped and sobbed and covered her face and her skinny shoulders heaved.

"But you like the bread and honey, eh?" Papa shouted.

Deborah raised her face, tracked with tears, and wailed, "Yes, I do. . . ."

Papa stared for a second. The corner of his mouth moved up unhappily to crease his cheek, and he muttered, "Well—" And then he said, "Benny, get me that shoe from the kitchen."

Ben ran happily for the shoe and brought it back, and also gave Papa the other one. Papa took Deborah's hand. "Debbie, sit here next to me, on the couch. . . . That's a good girl, don't cry." He wiped her face with his handkerchief, and tried on the shoes. "Maybe I was wrong about these Lutheran shoes, or are they Presbyterian? . . . Let's see."

He strode about before the wide-eyed children. Deborah still breathed in loud sniffs, and Papa kept walking until she breathed normally. He raised his brows, thrust forward his lips, and nodded strongly. "They could be worse. In fact, they're all right, a good fit, and well broken in into the bargain."

Ben was so pleased that he ran around butting his head against the faded upholstery of the furniture; Deborah blinked, her eyes defenseless for once, and her mouth fluttered into a grateful smile.

FEBRUARY passed, and March, and in April the frost vanished, and the sun shone on straw hats.

So it seemed to Deborah. She was seven

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years old, and had to have a straw hat. She ached to feel its texture and to own the splash of color that would decorate it from front to side. Why, girls in her class at school owned straw hats!

Every morning, every night, she pestered Mama. But Mama at that time was pregnant again. Climbing the five flights of stairs to and from the flat was in itself a day's work; not to mention cleaning, cooking, serving, and getting a man off to work and a child to school. She refused even to think of buying her a straw hat.

Papa, who was preoccupied with the ripening partnership scheme, paid no attention at first to Deborah's nagging. However, he was brought finally to the point of saying to Mama one night after Deborah was asleep, "My God, go to a pushcart on Ridge Street and buy the child a straw hat so we'll have some peace here!"

"Absolutely not," said Mama, with rare firmness. "I told her no, and it will *be* no."

"Must we make an issue of such an item?" asked Papa.

"All right," Mama acceded. "If you want to, get it. It's up to you. Only leave me out."

"Fine. I only shouldn't forget."

Mama laughed. "Some chance!"

PAPA brought the thing home, the next day, wrapped in a sheet of the *World*. The weather had turned cold, and a wind whipping in from the river had reddened his cheeks and nose and stiffened the bristles of his unshaven face. He said drily to Deborah, "Here's something you asked for."

The wise, gray, narrow eyes slanted up at him cautiously, and she unfolded the wrapping with care, saying nothing.

Papa, without looking at Deborah or seeming to expect thanks, tossed his hat and coat to Ben, who loved to climb a bedroom chair and hang up his father's clothing. Papa then went into the kitchen, with its warm, acrid stench of kerosene, and put his arm about Mama's shoulder as she stood at the burner, heating a pan of noodles for him.

"It's ready," she said. "Sit down, Nathan."

He drew a chair to the broad shelf which he'd built into the wall to take the place of a kitchen table.

"Papa," Deborah said hesitantly from the doorway, holding the pale-yellow hat in one hand and the newspaper that had covered it in the other.

He looked at her coldly. "Yes?"

She came to him, and in a voice full of disappointment said, "It has no flowers."

Papa took the news sheet from her, and, turning to Mama, remarked, "What do you think of this? They locked up Emma Goldman on Blackwell's Island last week."

"Emma Goldman? Is she from the house?"

Papa laughed. "Personally I think she's from an insane asylum. . . ."

Deborah kept staring at him, the corners of her mouth drooping just a little. She watched him pour pot cheese on his noodles, salt the mess, stir it, and ladle it in. She walked to her room, squeezed herself between the cots, and sat at the edge of hers. Ben had quietly trailed her, but he didn't go in. He saw her cradle the hat like a doll, rock it in her arms, whisper to it, and kiss it. Her face was very sad.

THE hat was put away, and not mentioned for two weeks. Then one day at the Poor School, teamsters carried in three barrels full of daisies. During lunch period, in the dim, gray-stoned gymnasium where a faint light trickled through the grated windows and fell among the stone pillars, the barrels were overturned. A white and gold effusion poured over the floor.

The children, not knowing what was meant or what to do, looked toward the two teachers, each of whom wore a low pompadour, a dark, puff-shouldered dress that reached the ground, and a white apron around her waist. The teachers exchanged glances of sagacious boredom.

One of them said, "Those are called daisies. You may take some."

The quiet ones still hesitated, but the bold ones grabbed at the long stems. Soon the children were tearing apart the flowers, throwing them at one another, or thrusting

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them into their hair and staggering wildly around the gymnasium. An odor of fresh, upturn earth pervaded the room.

Deborah selected six perfect daisies and kept them close to her until school was over. Then she ran home, knocking into people, who turned and cursed and shook their fists at her. Up the five flights she ran, and into the kitchen, where Mama was working.

"Look!" Deborah cried. "Look! They gave them to us in school!" She tugged at Mama's apron. "Mama, sew them on right away—please, Mama?"

"They're pretty," said Mama. "What are they?"

"The teacher said daisies. . . . Will you, Mama? Please sew them on!"

Mama turned up her palms. "On what? Who sews flowers?"

"On my straw hat!" Deborah exclaimed, losing patience.

Mama put the daisies in a jar of water. "These are not for a hat, Debbie. For a hat they don't use real flowers."

"No?" said Deborah, her voice quavering, dismayed, looking left and right as though a different, better answer might come from another direction.

Mama said, "Debbie, look how pretty." She placed the jar on the table-shelf. "Never mind, I'll get you something to sew on."

Deborah was incredulous. "You will?"

Mama nodded. "I will."

Mama bought a feather, a huge, yellow plume, and attached it to the side of Deborah's hat. Then she had to scold Deborah to make her take off her hat at mealtime. Ben kept pointing at the hat and making fun of the feather, which swayed in a gentle arc downward. Deborah didn't care what he said, and so he stopped.

Papa said it was very nice, beautiful in fact, and hoped she would enjoy it and wear it in the best of health. "You can show it to Uncle Dave," he suggested. "He'll be here tonight." To Mama, he added, "Tonight it'll be settled. Tomorrow we'll be partners, and when the new baby is born, you'll see, the silver spoon will be ready." He gave Mama a hug.

Deborah swaggered under the hat to her room. Ben followed, and watched her stand at the foot of the cot, staring out the window at the darkness. She stared and stared.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Thinking, if you must know," Deborah replied.

She decided, in the end, to show off the hat by itself first. After supper, when she heard Uncle trudging upstairs, she placed her hat on top of the couch backrest, a little to the side of where the upholstery was broken and the coil showed. She then hid in her unlighted room. After Uncle was stunned, and asked to see it on her, she would come out and wear it for him.

"Why are you in the dark?" demanded the ever-present Ben.

"None of your business. Get out of here."

Ben went into the living room. Papa and Uncle shook hands, and Papa took Uncle's coat and derby into the bedroom, while Uncle threw himself heavily on the couch, in front of Deborah's hat, which he did not notice. It took him a moment or two to notice Ben, whom he then beckoned to and patted on the head.

He lit a cigarette, looked around for an ash tray, saw none, was about to toss the match to the floor, glanced at Ben's wide eyes, and decided against it. He rose, touching Deborah's hat with his shoulder. The hat fell to the seat of the couch, and Uncle went to deposit the match in the kitchen sink.

Mama was at the shelf, sipping tea, with a vinegar-soaked cloth around her temples. Uncle slipped the match into his pocket, and said, "So, Hannah, it's hard to be a woman!"

Mama nodded, smiling weakly.

Uncle returned to the living room and, to Ben's astonishment, sat down on Deborah's hat. As Papa entered, there was a crunching of straw and a squeal from Ben, who exclaimed, "Debbie's hat!"

Uncle raised the object from beneath him, a pitiful caved-in thing with a plume snapped in half.

Debbie raced in, emitted a cry of pain,

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and stood speechless in the center of the room, her legs trembling.

"What is this?" asked Uncle in his slow voice, scrutinizing the former hat.

"Debbie's hat!" Ben repeated, pointing.

"Oh," Uncle said, turning his chubby face apologetically to Papa. "A hat. For my part it could have stayed a hat. I didn't know it was there."

Papa shrugged, leaned forward for the hat, and tossed it to a straight chair next to the bedroom door.

Deborah ran for it, clasped it to her flat bosom, and wailed, "My hat! Papa, my hat!"

Papa said over his shoulder, "It was an accident."

"But my hat!"

"Enough! If you can't be quiet, go out of the room!"

Deborah became very still. She stared at Uncle, her lips compressed, a long time. Then she looked into her parents' bedroom and entered it very quietly, with Ben, whom she didn't see, at her heels. The living room jets clarified the darkness to some extent. On the shadowy bed lay Uncle's coat, and, above it, his derby. Deborah let her hat slip to the floor, and moved Uncle's hat to the middle of the bed.

UNCLE, inside, was saying: "A complete line knee-pants? Well, I don't know. Are you sure? Of course, boys got knees, and they need pants—"

Deborah leaped, and Ben gasped. She bounced up and down, each time landing on Uncle's derby. Ben sneaked back to the living room, his face tingling.

Deborah sauntered in a moment later with Uncle's hat, a flattened, black piece of material. She wasn't immediately noticed.

"Is this a hat?" she said brightly. "For my part it could have stayed a hat."

Both men turned, and Uncle's face became a mottled red. He sprang up, twisted his hat out of Deborah's hand, drew it back in his own, and brought it down across her cheek with such force that she fell and narrowly missed the corner of the chair.

Papa leaped up and grabbed Uncle by the back of his collar and the seat of his pants. Uncle twisted and jerked, trying to release himself. Papa was stronger. He shoved Uncle to the door, out of the door to the landing, and slammed the door in his face.

Uncle pounded, shouting, "My coat! Where's my coat, you crook, you no-good bum, you *ganeff*!"

Papa stamped back for Uncle's coat, muttering, "Striking my child like that!"

Mama stumbled in from the kitchen, and saw Papa throw the coat at Uncle and slam the door again.

"You'll never set foot in *my* place of business from this day on, you can be sure of that!" Uncle yelled.

"You should hang until you see me there!" Papa yelled back.

Uncle's footsteps, heavy on the stairs, were heard descending. Papa glared around the room, panting, his hair disheveled. Ben had retreated to the kitchen door, where he stood next to Mama with lips parted. Mama was holding a hand to her cheek, crying noiselessly. Deborah had got up from where she had fallen, near the bedroom, and watched Papa with shrewd, half-frightened eyes. On her cheek was the red imprint of Uncle's hat, which lay at her feet.

Papa strode across the room to her, seized her arm, and gave her three hard wallops. As he spanked her, he declared through clenched teeth, "Let this teach you, there'll be no revolutionaries, no nihilists in this household. . . ."

Papa and Uncle didn't see each other after that night until Ben's wedding, sixteen years later. They both agreed that they had been foolish, because Papa had remained an operator, and Uncle, whose business had long since failed, had become one. "Well," said Uncle, shrugging his shoulders, which had become even fatter than before, "what can you do? That's how life is. . . ."

THE Sunday after Ben had dined in Riverdale, he woke late and lingered over coffee and a cigarette, gazing out the open

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kitchen window. The rooftops descended in a gently inverted curve into the Morrisania valley, and rose again to jut unevenly against the blue, cloudless sky. They lay ahead in a sad monotony, like the prospect of his day, and the loneliness was intensified by the sunlight gleaming against an occasional white streak of fluttering laundry.

The doorbell rang.

He started, and began to clear the mess of dishes from the table into the sink. A rapping at the door interrupted him.

Deborah marched in, sniffed, and remarked, "You could give those curtains to the laundry once in a while."

His eyes followed hers to the grimy rayon suspended from the window rods.

"You're letting yourself run down." Entering the living room, she added, "I'll admit it doesn't look so bad in here."

"I never go in there."

"Don't apologize. Start dressing. I'm taking my son-in-law for a ride down to the East Side, to show him how *I* used to live."

"O my God!" Ben exclaimed. "Leave me out of it, please!"

"What are you going to do, sit and stagnate with the dishes? Get dressed."

As he obeyed, Deborah moved nervously about the room, examining things that had been Edna's. The furniture was ten years old, heavily upholstered, and, to Deborah, boring. There were her books. Deborah removed one from the bookcase and handled it.

"You can have the living room dusted too," she called.

"Edna used to do it," Ben answered, and the sad irrelevance of his reply touched him.

DOWNSTAIRS, Peter Wenzel and the chauffeur were chatting with some children who had come to stare at the limousine. The children made way for Deborah, who didn't really see them.

The car sped down the uncrowded lanes of the Concourse, past the formal lawns of Joyce Kilmer Park, the massive, square County Courthouse, and the broad white steps of the Bronx Central Post Office. Ben and Wenzel watched the scenery, but Deborah talked.

". . . I especially wanted Marion to come, to see that money didn't always pour in from a restaurant. But no, she says she knows all about it. She knows! What she knows I could put in my eye. The years I spent working day and night, slaving, cooking, making sandwiches in a little store. Yes, and washing the floors after closing, too. She thinks the restaurant came to life in full bloom, just like it is today. What she knows!"

The car turned left into Manhattan and the East River Drive.

Wenzel said, "I really think she should have come. A thing like this can be fascinating. I may do a little article on it."

"Never mind about your articles," said Deborah. "Just try to learn a little moral from what you're going to see."

"I'll try, Mother," Wenzel replied.

He wore his hand-stitched jacket, but otherwise he was today dressed faultlessly. Deborah glanced toward Ben, who gazed steadfastly across the water at the low buildings and greenery of Welfare Island.

People swarmed over the East Side streets: shops were open and crowded; pushcarts lined the curbs.

"The streets seem narrower," said Deborah.

The car moved very slowly between the two rows of tenements on Avenue C. Deborah ordered the chauffeur to stop beside an empty lot, fenced around with wire mesh and littered with trash. "Wasn't it near here?" she asked Ben.

They got out of the car.

"This was it," Ben said. "They've torn it down." Deborah stared.

"And the others are standing," she murmured. "Was ours any worse?"

Ben suddenly felt sorry for her. "Let's go over and have a look at the school."

"No!" she cried, "no! Who wants to hunt for these old buildings any more. . . ." She turned to Wenzel, the folds over her cheeks narrowing her eyes painfully. "Look around, only just look around, and maybe you'll begin to understand!"

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS' "FOURTH REICH"

The German Emigrés' New Home

ERNEST STOCK

AT A PARTY given by a New Jersey Jewish community, a Princeton undergraduate mentioned that he knew Professor Einstein. "Tell me," one of the community leaders asked the young man, "is Einstein as conceited as the rest of the German Jews?"

The undergraduate happened to have come from Germany himself; and he could not help wryly reflecting upon how many disparaging remarks about "those German Jews" he had been subjected to. They are "conceited," they "stick together and won't mix with the rest of us," they are "arrogant," they are "schemers," they are "mercenary"—a long list of accusations sounding not too much unlike the ideas about Jews generally harbored by anti-Semites.

In part, this attitude undoubtedly stems from the fact that the old-established Jews in Germany have a long record for looking down their noses at Eastern European Jews, whose kin and descendants now make up the bulk of the American Jewish population. One young German immigrant said flatly, "They have never forgiven us for July 1938." He was referring to the Nazi deportation of Polish Jews to the No Man's Land between Germany and Poland—a measure which some of the native-born German Jews regarded with apathy and even, it has been said, with a certain feeling of relief at its affecting "only the Polish Jews." Needless to say, this particular speaker was oversimplifying the matter; and most American Jews are, of course, happily unaware of the details of this and similar episodes.

There is, it is said, a small minority of the new immigrants who even here still persist in being contemptuous of Eastern European Jews. Some especially, who left Germany in the early days of the Hitler regime under no personal duress and with most of their property intact, expected that they would be readily accepted in "Aryan" circles here. When their hopes were disappointed, they made no real effort to find an entry into American Jewish circles, and haughtily confined themselves to their own group.

But among the post-1938 immigrants a decidedly different attitude prevails. They never deluded themselves that they came by choice, that they did not have to emigrate. It is true that many of them, too, were disappointed when they encountered social bar-

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THE integration into American society of the German Jews who came here as refugees from Nazism took place with a speed and thoroughness unparalleled in the history of immigration. Nevertheless, like all immigrant groups, the German Jewish newcomers of the 1930's developed in the process a distinctive social coloration: ERNEST STOCK tries here to describe it, with special reference to the Washington Heights section of New York, named by the German Jews themselves (with somewhat heavy-handed jocosity) the "Fourth Reich." Mr. Stock, now on the staff of the Hillel Foundation in New York, was born in Frankfort in 1924 and came to this country in 1940. He attended public schools in Frankfort, in France, and in New York City, and studied at Princeton University and the Columbia School of Journalism. He served with the United States Army Criminal Investigation Division in Europe, and recently spent a year in Israel as a United Press correspondent and staff member of the Jerusalem *Post*.

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riers between Jews and Gentiles: they had expected to find American society equalitarian in every sense, and it came as a shock to discover how much it is a series of rather tight ethnic enclaves. Although Jews in pre-Hitler Germany were organized in legally constituted religious communities (*Gemeinden*), the social relations of the German Jew were by no means restricted to his fellow Jews; German Jewish professionals frequented the homes of other German professionals, whereas, in New York, Jewish doctors and lawyers tend to visit the homes of other Jewish doctors and lawyers. But as the newcomers became more aware of the structure of American society, the initial disappointment lost significance, and they were more and more ready to seek the company of American Jews without inquiring too closely as to what side of the river Oder they came from.

There are, finally, the relatively few survivors of the death camps, and those who spent the war years in such places as Shanghai, living on the generosity of the American Joint Distribution Committee. These people identify their fate with that of Jews from Eastern Europe, and some now feel closer to the Eastern Jews than to their former countrymen.

But varying dates of arrival constitute only one differentiation in the many-stranded make-up of what is called the German Jewish group. (Incidentally, the expression "refugee" from the lips of an American has a most distasteful sound to the immigrant; nevertheless, the word is freely used by the immigrants themselves—almost all of them by now American citizens—when they refer to one another. In its English form, it has become a part of their German vocabulary.) One of the most trenchant distinctions is that between the Germans and the Austrians. The Austrians refer to the Germans as *"Yeckes"*; for the Germans the Austrians are simply *"die Wiener."* The gulf between the two groups is very wide. They have their separate clubs and congregations, and their members rarely mix socially. They don't even live in the same neighborhoods. In New York, where perhaps two-thirds of the immigrants are concentrated, the main Viennese districts are midtown Manhattan between 72nd and 96th Streets and some sections of Queens. The Germans, for their part, have moved *en masse* to the uptown section of Manhattan known as Washington Heights, settling in an area that lies, roughly, between 160th and 180th Streets and west of Broadway, and that the immigrants themselves have dubbed *"das vierte Reich."*

THE Jews of Washington Heights constitute the solid core of the wave of immigration from Germany. It is difficult to say exactly how many of them live there, but the circulation department of the German-language weekly *Aufbau,* which is read in almost every German Jewish family, reports that it sells some 6,000 copies in the area. If the average family has four members, an estimate of 25,000 persons might be fairly accurate. This constitutes about 20 per cent of the 129,582 persons admitted on immigration visas from Germany and Austria between 1933 and 1944,* but it may be assumed that an additional ten or fifteen thousand arrived during those eleven years on vistors' visas and later received permission to remain permanently. (Since 1944 the influx of German Jews has been negligible.)

Even so, the size of the German Jewish group is extremely small compared to earlier waves of immigration, when hundreds of thousands of immigrants arrived in a single year. But this numerically insignificant group has nevertheless managed to cause a flurry on the American scene within a very short space of time. One striking fact that may do much to account for the success of the group is that this immigration has been almost 100 per cent middle class, an entirely new phenomenon in American social history.

America usually expects its immigrants to start on the bottom rung of the economic and social ladder, and this is the one rule of the game that the German Jews have refused to accept. To cite one example: there were several thousand doctors in the group, and all of them were determined to continue practicing their profession. The great majority have done so, but they have had to face some real resentment on the part of their American Jewish colleagues, especially since the medical profession in New York is already,

*This figure is from *Refugees in America,* a study compiled under the auspices of the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration, directed by Professor Maurice R. Davie of Yale University, and published by Harper.

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in the opinion of many of its members, overcrowded. There is also, on the part of those American Jews who remember the intense struggles of their own parents and grandparents, some feeling that the Germans are trying to have things too easy—and, what is worse, succeeding.

To be sure, the immigrants themselves have in some ways added fuel to the flames. Everyone has heard stories of German Jews boasting about their former glories and the virtues of the German way: *"Bei uns war es besser."* Perhaps the most popular anecdote in this connection is the one about the dachshund who remarks to an American dog: "In Germany I used to be a St. Bernard."

There is no doubt that a considerable number of the immigrants took a certain reduction in the living standard they were accustomed to, especially during the first period of their adjustment here. But there were also a great many others who tended to glamorize their former estate, which in reality was never so comfortable as life between Fort Washington Avenue and Broadway. In some cases these romancers manage to make their pretensions stick, but rarely with their more sophisticated fellow immigrants. Those who came from small towns and villages will be haunted by that fact to the end of their days, at least so far as their cosmopolitan cousins from Frankfort, Cologne, or Berlin are concerned. Many of the other social distinctions that prevailed among Jews in Germany have been effaced, but this one of small town against big city persists. It is not uncommon to hear children arguing among themselves about where their parents came from, and families that moved to the cities only a short time before emigrating will now informally claim their last residence. A few months ago, I was told of an elderly lady who looked at a furnished room on 180th Street and decided it was not for her because the bathtub did not quite suit her. "And do you know," said the landlord, who was telling the story, "she comes from ———, and I will bet my last penny there wasn't a single bathtub in the whole village."

Whatever nostalgia for the "good old times" actually remains is not to be confused with a longing to go back. The thought of returning to Germany is never even discussed, and probably no more than a hundred of the immigrants have actually gone. For most, the break is complete, much more complete than it was for immigrants from Eastern Europe; there are no letters going back and forth, no families to support, no wistful voyages to the old home town. Now and then someone with a claim to property flies over to speed things up, but these business visits are limited to the absolute minimum required, and invariably the travelers are glad to get "back home"—which means, without any mental reservations, back to the United States.

WHAT prompted the pioneers among the immigrants to settle up there in Washington Heights is now shrouded in the semi-legendary past of 1933 and the years immediately following. Perhaps it was the—at the moment somewhat shabby—gentility of the neighborhood, which, along with the style of the buildings, the parks nearby, and the cool breeze from the Hudson in the evening, carried vague reminders of the bourgeois residential sections of the German cities.

By now, of course, a number of the immigrants are established on the lower West Side, some even on Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue. Others were attracted to more outlying districts, especially Forest Hills and Kew Gardens in Queens, where the German Jews seem to mix more readily with their American neighbors, frequenting lodge meetings and community centers in much larger numbers than on Washington Heights. (The Queens group is younger on the average than the group in Washington Heights, and their very moving away often signified an intentional break with the restricted social environment of the Heights.) But most of the immigrants have stayed up there, south of Fort Tryon Park and north of where Fort Washington Avenue runs into Broadway. Perhaps more would have moved away if war and the housing shortage had not intervened. But the chances are that the solid core of them will stay on even when apartments have once more become plentiful, simply because they don't like to move once they are settled down. And somehow those twenty or thirty blocks have by now taken on a very homelike quality.

There is, however, little that is aggressively German about this neighborhood, in the way that Yorkville is aggressively German, with its German restaurants, German movies,

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travel bureaus, and *Bierstuben*. True, the *Staatszeitung* is displayed on all the news stands, but so are Jewish *Day* and the *Forward*. (They are for the "natives"; the German Jews don't read Yiddish.) The German Jews, although in some ways proud of their antecedents and still secretly convinced that it is a mark of distinction to have been born in Germany rather than in some Polish village with an unpronounceable name, have on the whole a very nice sense of tact. The shops they have taken over on Broadway and 181st Street, from candy stores to five-and-tens, are no different from any others except for the accent of the man behind the counter, and, perhaps, the fact that the windows of their bakeries contain some of the most succulent butter cookies produced in the Western Hemisphere.

These bakeries are among the most tangible manifestations of the German Jewish hold on Washington Heights; although they dutifully turn out a certain quota of sweet and fluffy American-style *challah* on Fridays, they devote their main efforts on that day to the production of the German *barches*, which has a hard crust covered with poppy seed and is not sweet in taste. Another tangible contribution of the German Jews to the Washington Heights scene is an excellent candy shop on 181st Street, the original store of the Barton chain which has since spread all over the city, setting an example of Orthodoxy by faithfully closing for Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Apart from these shops, any citizen of the Heights must admit that it is a gustatory wasteland when compared to, say, certain districts of the West Bronx. The German Jewish cuisine differs but slightly from the somewhat stodgy German *Kueche*, and it has been modified only by the enthusiastic adoption of canned food by housewives who work during the day. *Gefilte fish* and other characteristically Jewish dishes are unknown.

Nor can the women of Washington Heights compete with the West Bronx ladies when it comes to dress. One black dress, one brown dress, and one blue dress are considered an entirely adequate wardrobe by many. This is in line with the general strain of frugality that runs through the colony: a man will boast to a friend who is wearing a new suit that he has bought no new clothes since he came over here—though this boast is now heard less and less frequently from women.

If you ask a local resident what the outstanding contribution of his group has been to Washington Heights, he may smile slyly and point to the stylish new building of the Harlem Savings Bank at Broadway and 181st Street: "They built that with our money." It is possible that the bank would have moved from its old ground-floor offices diagonally across the street even without the arrival of the immigrants, but anyone willing to take the trouble can see with his own eyes that the German Jews line up by the hundreds at the tellers' windows every Friday afternoon to deposit a good part of the contents of their pay envelopes. And tight-lipped bank officials will come across with the information that a "substantial number" of the breadwinners have long ago reached the $10,000 maximum for federal insurance on savings accounts, and have started a second or third account in the name of another member of the family. Insurance salesmen, somewhat more talkative, assert that the percentage of lapses on policies taken out by the immigrants is zero.

Many families are still using the heavy German furniture they brought over in their packing crates twelve and fifteen years ago. The center of the traditional living room is a massive table with straight-backed chairs around it; along one wall stretches the so-called "buffet," a two-story cabinet used to store linen, china, and silver. In the top half, a glass showcase, knick-knacks and small antiques are exhibited. Part of another wall may then be taken up by a bookcase almost ceiling-high, with the books protected from dust and the mere browser by a locked, glass-paneled door.

With others, this type of furniture remained crated while the family settled temporarily in a small apartment. Later, as storage charges mounted, the oak, walnut, and mahogany was sold for what it would bring. Or sometimes it cluttered up the first dwelling place only to be thrown out on the move to the second, when the owner discovered that moving charges here are based on weight rather than cubic space. Today American furniture has replaced German neo-baroque in most of the living rooms; but where space permits, the vast German twin beds—each bed almost the size of an American double

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bed—have remained in the bedroom. They may not look very up to date, but they are too comfortable to be thrown out, and besides a bedroom is not meant to be a showplace anyway.

THE Jews of Washington Heights do "stick together." It is in the very nature of such a neighborhood that it tends to keep social relations within the group. And it is in the nature of any group of new immigrants to settle in a place where the pioneers of their kind have already broken the alien ground. Then inertia and their inherent German conservatism keep most of them from seeking new vistas. The average German Jew over forty is most content in his home or with a circle of friends from his home town speaking German. Outside the home, he is likely to be happiest in a German Jewish social club, formed either for the purpose of playing *Skat* or merely for *Kaffeeklatsch*.

Professor Davie's study, mentioned above, states that in a nationwide cross section, 46.8 per cent of the recent immigrants had mainly other recent immigrants as friends, 40.3 per cent had mainly American friends, and 12.8 per cent had friends equally divided between the two. Among those living in New York, however, 61.3 per cent had only other recent immigrants as their friends. (Those living in small towns and any but the largest cities are more or less compelled to go outside the immigrant group for their associations; although there are occasional instances of immigrants in the smaller cities being given the cold shoulder by the established Jewish families, easy adjustment is the rule.) Probably the count for Washington Heights alone would be higher still. And within the section itself association is to a high degree governed by place of residence. For instance, a twenty-year-old girl reports that when her parents lived near Yeshiva College on 185th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, where the "natives" outweigh the immigrants, all her friends were American Jews, but when they moved to the corner of Fort Washington Avenue and 170th Street, a section where 75 per cent of the tenants in most apartment houses are immigrants, she gradually lost track of her American friends and began to associate with "my own kind."

Of even greater importance than place of residence in determining the immigrant's associations is the age at which he came to the United States. As was to be expected, the high school generation—those who were still young enough to start high school or at least to complete a substantial part of it in this country—had the least difficulty in "assimilating." Professor Davie estimates that 15 per cent of the immigrants were in this "under sixteen" category. Many of them showed an unusual degree of adaptability, and the records of George Washington High School, on 190th Street, abound with the names of immigrant youngsters who after one or two years in the country reached the head of their class. In 1943, an immigrant boy set the all-time mark for scholastic achievement at this school.

These children quickly lost their German accents and became generally indistinguishable from their native-born classmates. The importance of this can hardly be overestimated: often the German accent makes the difference between complete integration in American life and permanent status as an "outsider." As a rule, the children speak German only at home, or they reply in English when their parents speak to them in German. Yet fundamental estrangement between the old and the younger generations, once the rule in immigrant families, seems to occur very rarely in this group. The parents encourage their offspring to imitate American customs and are proud to see them become such complete *Amerikaner*. True, they may shake their heads when Johnny (formerly Hans) remains glued to the television set all afternoon watching the Yankees, or when Joanie doesn't come home from the movies until eleven, but they are in general resigned to the fact that "children are brought up differently over here."

Middle-class Jewish homes in German cities (and what home wasn't middle-class?) had about them a certain aura of great warmth and security. That atmosphere is largely lost in America. With women working outside the home, the tight family structure is broken up and parental authority suffers, especially as the children become the authorities on American ways while the parents remain in many respects perpetual "greenhorns." The home in Germany was the mainstream of culture. The same home on Washington Heights is not yet rooted in anything that might be described as Ameri-

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can culture. For one thing, there isn't so much reading any more—work and subway travel are too demanding. The books that do get read are not on a level with the German works that still fill the bookshelves, and immigrants who were as a matter of course well read in modern German and European literature are likely to know nothing about, say, William Faulkner or Ezra Pound or F. Scott Fitzgerald. (Hemingway was popular in Germany in translation.) This is true even of men in the intellectual professions, such as doctors and lawyers. The only exceptions are the few men who teach on the college level, and those professionals and artists who have achieved general recognition in their fields, and with it a circle of professional friends and associates outside Washington Heights.

Occasionally boys or girls from cultured homes are frustrated because they cannot find companions at school with whom to share their interests, if these go beyond movies, cars, and sports. This problem is of course not peculiar to young immigrants, but belongs to adolescent intellectuals in general. In the German Jewish group, however, it is somewhat intensified by the desire to leave the German background behind and assimilate to American life; many young people are anxious to move out of their parents' circle, and yet find the social life of the YMHA's and other American youth groups unsatisfying. Some have remained outside all organized social life; some, naturally enough, have found their way into organizations within the Zionist movement.

THE decisive step towards integration is always marriage into the established group. Professor Davie's researchers found that 62.4 per cent of the male German Jewish immigrants married German Jewish immigrant girls, leaving 37.6 per cent who married outside the group—an exceptionally high proportion for a recent immigrant group. The bulk of this large minority is, of course, supplied by the high school generation; in most cases, the boys take the initiative by dating and then marrying American Jewish girls, though it sometimes also works the other way. In either case, the couple gravitates inevitably away from the German and toward the American environment; no more German is spoken, and the American parents are usually more favored by the couple.

As a rule, the German parents are at first mildly opposed to this type of "intermarriage," feeling that their child would be happier with a mate of their own background. The mothers are convinced that German Jewish girls make better *Hausfrauen,* and that German Jewish boys are more stable and more predictable. But usually everything works out all right in the end. (Intermarriage between German Jews and Gentiles, it might be mentioned, is an extreme rarity.) At some of the "mixed weddings" the gulf between the two parties is accentuated by the practice of having the bride's and groom's relatives and friends sit on separate sides of the aisle, and later the German and American Jews tend to cluster in their own little groups. At one such affair recently, the rabbi in his speech recalled the story of Ruth—which may have been somewhat farfetched.

THOSE young people who were too old to go to high school when they came, and started to work immediately, have found it a good deal harder to make social contacts among Americans. The most telling indication of this is the fact that very few of them marry outside the group. Most of these young men and women at one time made a determined effort to break down the barrier, did not quite succeed, and then retreated. Many of them have never entirely got rid of the German accent. It is the members of this age group, now in their late twenties, who will prolong the collective life of the German Jewish group after those who came here as mature men and women are gone. Most of the young men served in the army, which in many cases gave them their first contact with "real Americans," but, with a few exceptions, they came back to Washington Heights, literally or figuratively. The exceptions were in the main the veterans who took advantage of the GI Bill to go to college (the majority of these had had some American high school training before they entered the army).

Some of this generation went to evening high school or college, but that experience yielded few American contacts. They have formed a plethora of clubs of their own: soccer clubs, hiking clubs, social clubs, etc. The youth group of the New World Club alone sponsors half a dozen of these. The members

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of these clubs have often felt uneasy about the way they have isolated themselves, and have made some efforts to widen their social horizon. A characteristic manifestation was the formation of an American Veterans Committee unit, called the New World Club Chapter, and exclusively German Jewish, which was later merged with a Washington Heights group of a more mixed membership and renamed the Ernie Pyle Chapter. The new chapter was militantly leftist in its stand on social and political issues, and shortly after the 1948 elections it was expelled from the national AVC because its chairman had publicly endorsed Henry Wallace. Here as in so many other areas, the Wallaceites, though in the minority, were the most active group. The other German Jews vote dutifully, and with pride in their citizenship, but active participation in local politics is the last thing anyone thinks of. Although there were, of course, Jewish politicians in Germany, they just don't feel at home in the American political climate. Few of them have ever set foot in the Heights Democratic or Republican clubs.

A number of the German Jewish community organizations do function within larger American Jewish organizations, which seems an ideal way to assuage the desire for general recognition and affiliation to the larger community while at the same time retaining the advantages of being "among ourselves." Examples of this type of group are the Leo Baeck Lodge of B'nai B'rith, the newly formed Daniel Frisch Lodge of B'nai Zion, and a Theodor Herzl Society which in due course became District 81 of the Zionist Organization of America, one of the most active Zionist Districts in New York. A group of World War I veterans of the German army, known as the Jewish Veterans Association, has a large membership in Washington Heights. It cultivates friendly relations with the Jewish War Veterans of America, but the fact that the members of the two organizations once fought on opposite sides remains an obvious obstacle to outright affiliation.

Somewhat of a class apart within the older group are intellectuals. As a rule they move in a small circle of other German Jewish intellectuals, including those who used to be lawyers, journalists, or teachers on the other side and are now either manual or white-collar workers. Their attitude might be summed up as follows: they have no hostility toward the American environment, no prejudice or snobbishness, but their outlook on life is different from that of their American counterparts, and thus they feel more at home among themselves. Many of these men have also sensed at one time or another that Americans don't feel completely at ease in their presence. They have been, at first encounter, the object of polite interest, but there was often hardly enough common ground to keep it up. A favorite topic of conversation among the Germans is still the incongruities and, from the European point of view, the amusing aspects of the American scene, which they discuss more freely and with more gusto among themselves. The Germans do nevertheless admire a great many traits in the "typical American"—his energy, his lack of social inhibitions, his good humor, etc.—but they feel themselves just a little too worldly-wise ever to be like that themselves.

THE New World Club is probably the most remarkable of the one hundred and fifty or so organizations the German Jews have set up for themselves. The club started its career in 1924 with the descriptive but somewhat unimaginative name of German Jewish Club. In December 1934, the renamed club began what was to become its most important activity: the publication of a monthly newsletter, *Aufbau*. Today *Aufbau*, a 36-page weekly, can be found on most news stands from the Battery to Spuyten Duyvil Creek, and on a good many others from Johannesburg to Stockholm to Montevideo, and its subscription list includes addresses not only in all forty-eight states, Canada, and South America, but also in the Belgian Congo, Nyassaland, and New Zealand. The paper seems to have found the right formula for acting as a link among German Jews everywhere.

The contents of *Aufbau* show plainly that, however restricted its readers' contacts with American Jews in the flesh, they feel very much affected by what happens in the Jewish community at large. *Aufbau* has had a Zionist orientation from the beginning, though it might be called a moderate one, and Jewish community activities on behalf of Israel have received full coverage in its columns. Similar coverage has been

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given to non-Zionist community activities. Among the paper's regular features are political commentaries by the editor, Manfred George; they are well informed, sober, and in the best tradition of European journalism. There is also theater, film, and art criticism on a fairly high level, a column dealing with the doings of refugees in Hollywood, a women's page, community news, and a "News from Israel" section. Outside contributors of the paper have included such figures as Thomas Mann, Fritz von Unruh, and the late Franz Werfel, and the columns of Walter Lippman and Harold Ickes were regularly featured for years.

The advertisements in each issue mirror the business success of a portion of the group, in such fields as summer resorts, furs, women's wear, furniture, books, jewelry, insurance, shipping, investment, automobiles, cameras, etc. On the other hand, the ads do not reveal how many former businessmen—big and small—have failed to gain a foothold in the intensely competitive business world here; Professor Davie reported that only one out of six former businessmen had a business of his own, the rest were employed. As in American society as a whole, financial success has pretty much become the determinant of status in the community. With former peddlers become factory-owners and former factory-owners putting clothes on the racks of department stores, it is hardly surprising that all but the subtlest of social distinctions have been blurred.

WHAT of the religious life of the immigrants? At first glance, it appears to be flourishing. Every week, twenty German Jewish congregations, most of them on Washington Heights, publish the schedule of their services in *Aufbau*. But all twenty together have fewer than 10,000 members, and a great many of those never come to *shul* except on the High Holidays.

Contrary to the widely held notion that the Jews of Germany were the most "assimilated," a vast section of the German Jewish middle class formerly adhered to a conservative brand of Judaism, which included strict observance of the Sabbath with regular visits to the synagogue. In the cities of Germany all Jewish life had revolved around the *Gemeinde*—the community—and in order to be a recognized member of the community one had to take part in the religious observances. In the United States, however, religious observance, which had been part of the pattern of life in a fairly homogeneous community, has been gradually abandoned. At first, some people worked on Saturdays; those who had businesses of their own kept them open. The fight for a living in the new country, they claimed, was too exhausting; they had neither time nor energy left to practice religion. There was also the argument that in a world where one's relatives are burnt to death, there could be no God. For these and other reasons, religious observance declined, and today the German Jews of New York are perhaps less observant than their American Jewish neighbors.

In New York, the German Jewish congregations—for they are no longer "communities"—are almost all of the Conservative type; there is only one nominally Reform congregation, Habonim; its services, however, would be called Conservative by American standards. Most of those who had been Reform in Germany either dropped the whole thing or else they joined an American Reform synagogue. A few of the German synagogues are Orthodox, the most important of these being that of Rabbi Breuer, who headed the great Orthodox congregation in Frankfort. The members of this congregation—more than eight hundred of them—constitute the most closely knit community within the German Jewish faction; it is said that their children only marry the children of other members. Doubtless this is an exaggeration, but it is true that this Orthodox congregation is one of the few in which the younger people actively participate in religious life; in most of the others, the rabbis complain that "the young people don't come"—a familiar enough complaint in American Jewish life as a whole.

Nevertheless, some of the congregations are expanding, remodeling old quarters, and building new ones. One rabbi, who is also the president of his congregation, has just negotiated the purchase of the $400,000 property in which his synagogue is situated, financing the purchase partly through a bond issue to his members—a sign, perhaps, of the sense of stability which has succeeded the first anxious efforts to "get settled."

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

SIX RENAISSANCE POEMS

"Beneath the Ashes Glow the Coals"

SECULAR Hebrew poetry in Italy, after Immanuel of Rome (1270-1328), never equaled Immanuel's exuberance or his excellence. But the following poems, drawn from the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, testify to a continuous and vital tradition in Italian Hebrew literature.

When Ashkenazic culture had long since passed into the pale of purely religious concerns, Southern European Jewry did not forget the love song, the song of insult, the epithalamion. And it is no accident that Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, the 18th-century precursor of modern Hebrew poetry, emerged in Italy.

The poets represented below are: Refael da Faenza, who lived about 1450; Agnelo Dato, born in 1525, died between 1591-1601; Jacob Frances, born in 1618, died after 1667; and his brother, Immanuel Frances, born in 1618, died after 1710. The most distinguished member of this quartet is Immanuel Frances, but even his work, like that of his predecessors, is more significant as an expression of the Italian temperament than as the inevitable form of one man's vision.

IN TRANSLATING the following poems, I have been faithful to that temperament, but not, in the verses of Dato and da Faenza, to the text. The alterations, however, involve re-ordering, tightening, and omission, rather than addition.—ALLEN MANDELBAUM.

For Pappus the Innkeeper To His Love

O HEARKEN, crown of glory, incomparably
fair, to Pappus' song and to his plaint,
O hear the bellow of the bull, the braying
of the ass—thou art his love, his mate.

His soul is scorchèd grain, his heart, a roast
upon desire's spit, turns, burns;
O gaze, gazelle, down from thy window, where
with passion and *tendresse,* thy gallant yearns.

But see his fallen face and form, his pining
paunch, and eyes that have spilled endless tears;
his bald-spot's chill, his stray gray locks hang damp
with dew, and like the tom-cat he appears

who stalks the rooftops, solitary,
howling, wailing bitterly,
because the fog withholds his she.

—IMMANUEL FRANCES

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O Galantina

BELOVED, favor now my plea,
O Galantina.

Thy lips are honey sweetly strong,
feast, comely kind, thy tongue
upon my palate, un-
ashamedly, night long
will we loud sing renewal's song
while love's own congregations,
as vast as bannered legions,

Hymns of love resound,
O Galantina.

Upon my couch, thy radiance
I have recalled, thy wanton
dress, and dreamt alone
to laud thine excellence
in bright terrazzo halls, to rest
my head between thy breasts,
in the tower built of turrets,

Beloved, summon me,
O Galantina.

—REFAEL DA FAENZA

Grave Notes

THE DRUNKARD
Lifelong, no water touched my lips,
and wine did quench me all my years;
therefore, O reader, I beseech
thee, water not my grave with tears.

THE HOTHEAD
Here lies one senseless, prone to fury;
as from archer's arrows, flee,
O passer-by, lest in his wrath
he hurl this tombstone straight at thee.

THE FAIR ONE
A maiden fairer than all others
rests below, yet none is found
among her swains, who now would lie
beside his lovely on this ground.

THE PHYSICIAN
Give gracious thanks, O reader, to thy Lord,
that he who lies here was not thy physician
for had he been, his epitaph thou'd'st never
read—but rest indeed in his position.

—IMMANUEL FRANCES

Love's Fall

HAD I not known thee, Love, of old,
not felt within my flesh, thy power,
nor in my heart, thy flame, not cowered,
like a snail, beneath thy rod,

had I not, at thy fierce ascent,
seen tyranny that, like a sun,
compelled within its wide dominion
human, beast of field, and insect,

then would I now proclaim thee braggart
Prince of Tohu, all desire
a lamb that mimes the leopard's stance,

for Ophra's breast disdains thy fire,
thy vaunted shafts are wax against
the marble of indifference.

—JACOB FRANCES

Age

O MOCK me not if I still carol
songs of lust, though I am old;
beneath the ashes glow the coals,
within me wakes my heart though I
may sleep; and if my hair be pale
as moons, not so my quality.

—AGNELO DATO

In Praise of Sleep

LOVE, I recall the grace of night,
where, in a dream, you did present
her brightness for my wonderment;
in that darkness, she was light.

My lady's goodness then did seize
me fast, and vision quickened breath;
but in my waking, weariness—
would that I might never rise.

Dream, return and me entrance,
O then will I name Sleep "my prince,"
for he has resurrected me,

and then confess my sin, for once,
when reason had been thrust from me,
did I call Sleep, Death's second face.

—IMMANUEL FRANCES

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ON THE HORIZON

WHAT HAPPENED TO ABRAMOVICH?

Leafing Through Volume "A" of the New Soviet Encyclopedia

MARK KHINOY

THERE is no insight into a nation's way of thought like a copy of its chief work of reference. Equipped only with a ruler—to measure the lengths of articles—we may discover what is considered important and what barely worthy of mention, what great thinker is now considered a fool, and what fool a great thinker. We are led to mysteries, and, pondering them, may uncover insights.

So musing, one takes one's ruler in hand and approaches the first volume, "A," of the second edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. The first edition was published twenty-five years ago, in 1926; that a great deal has happened in Russia in the meantime is a truth testified to immediately by the absence of the names of all the original editors from the new masthead. I turned to the section of the encyclopedia dealing with noteworthy individuals of the name "Abramovich." In the first edition, I recalled, Sholom Jacob Abramovich, better known to literature under his *nom de plume* Mendele Mocher Seforim, had been given a lengthy article, as befitted the father of Yiddish literature. But my ruler now hung helpless in my hand—not a line. The full two columns of the first edition of 1926 had disappeared without a trace.

Indeed, the tribe of famous Abramoviches in general seemed to have succumbed to some literary plague: writers, artists, scientists, famous revolutionists—all had disappeared. My friend Raphael Abramovich, once the leader of the Jewish Bund and the Russian Social Democratic party, and now resident in this country, was at least considered worthy of a full-length attack by Bukharin and his fellow editors of the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. He has disappeared from the second. One Abramovich, whom the old editorial board had paradoxically chosen to ignore, remains to represent all other bearers of that name in the new edition—Abramovich, Vsevelod Mikhailovich, an early flier who comes from Caucasian Georgia, Stalin's homeland. He is the grandson of Abramovich-Mendele, but, as it happens, he is also the son of a man who converted to Christianity.

Abramovich is not the only name to be affected by the editorial changes in the Soviet Encyclopedia. Jewish names in general no longer seem to be quite *de rigueur* among Soviet citizens and famous Russians, if they wish to be entered in the encyclopedia. The lifelong comrade of Raphael Abramovich in the Bund, Aisenshtadt-Yudin, also worth a full vituperative attack in the first edition, has disappeared. (Fellow socialists of Christian origin seem to have been spared: Nikolas D. Avksentiev, who died in the United States in 1943, is amiably referred to as "an agent of the Imperialist Allies" who "organized counter-revolutionary uprisings.") The short-story writer D. I. Aizman, the critic and writer I. A. Aichenwald, the critic Jacob W. Abramov —all these are gone.

But no hostile critic should leap to the conclusion that Russian Jews have been eliminated from the Soviet Encyclopedia; the editors have been careful to include a small sampling: the two Axelrods—Paul B. and L. Orthodox—who were active in the fight against czarism, and fortunately did not live to be purged with their comrades in later

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days, and a Dr. Averbuch, a Moscow eye specialist.

PERHAPS, after all, the editors did away with Mendele because they just did not have the room to deal with all of Russia's new-found cultural glories. The editors of the first edition, it seems, had ignored Kunabayev Abay (1845-1904) from Kazakstan, and Khachatur Abovan (1805-1840) from Armenia—both have now been given their full due, and are honored with full-page color portraits, as well as long articles. Then, too, room was needed for Semion N. Aksionov (1784-1853), "a Russian guitarist who introduced a new style in the technique of guitar playing," and for Amurzayev, "a poet who eulogized the Stalin Five-Year Plans" in the native tongue of the Karafalkatsk province.

If the Abramoviches have been banished with scarcely a trace, the Adlers remain—as horrible examples of what people are capable of outside the sacred borders of the Soviet Union. Alfred Adler was described rather objectively in the 1926 edition of the encyclopedia as "the author of an original school of modern psychology . . . the school of so-called Individualist psychology," and the article continued with a résumé of his teachings. All this turns out to have been a serious error. The entry now reads *in toto*: "A reactionary Viennese psychopathologist, an Idealist and a pupil of Sigmund Freud." Presumably it is too dangerous now for an encyclopedia even to report Adler's theory that the power motive is the dominant one in human behavior.

The distinguished Austrian Socialist leader Victor Adler (1852-1916) was the subject of a long article by Karl Radek in the 1926 edition. Two scurrilous paragraphs are now considered adequate. Of his son, Friedrich Adler, who assassinated the prime minister of Austria-Hungary in 1916 for his role in starting the First World War, the new encyclopedia reports: "The leader of the Right Socialists, the most bitter enemy of the revolutionary labor movement, an agent of American imperialism, who had, at the same time, infected the working class of Austria with the poison of 'cosmopolitanism.'"

Russians nurtured on the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia will discover that, in twenty-five years, not only have a host of Abramoviches vanished from living memory, but the history of the world in general has been transformed. Indeed, most of its history before 1917 has simply disappeared. Nor is it only relatively minor figures, like Uriel Acosta, the Jewish rationalist philosopher of the 17th century, who have been eliminated. Ideas that have played a leading role in history have also been snipped out of the record. "Absolute Rights," which received extensive and fairly objective treatment in the first edition of the encyclopedia, has been eliminated completely. Gone, too, is "Academic Freedom." "Absolutism" was defined in the 1926 edition as "autocracy, unlimited political power, one-man rule." This provocative definition has been revised to read: "Absolutism is a form of government in which all power belongs to the emperor, the king, the czar. . . ."

The "Agrarian Problem" was considered to be worth a 100-page article in the 1926 edition; agrarian history in ancient, medieval, and modern times was reviewed. In the new edition, the space has been cut one-third, and the reduced article is devoted almost entirely to the agrarian programs of the Social Democrats and Bolsheviks in Lenin's time, and to the Soviet collectivizations that have brought Russia's millions "so much joy and happiness." The age-old struggle of Russian peasants against serfdom and the landed gentry is passed over as if it had never been.

TRULY, as the editors of the encyclopedia write in their introduction, "Soviet culture has ranged higher than the culture of the capitalist countries." For Russian culture before 1917 is now illuminated by the glow of retrospective discovery. "The further evolution of the theoretical ideas [on aviation by Leonardo da Vinci] and their practical application were accomplished by Russians." Not Vasco da Gama but Apanasi Nikitin opened the sea route to India. And so it goes, on and on—until the third edition will no doubt open a new chapter in this fascinating serial. Who knows? Perhaps we will even meet some of our lost Abramoviches once again, springing fully formed from the ear of a (new) Soviet editor.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

ISRAEL'S OPINION POLLS AND WHAT THEY FIND

An American Social Science Transplanted

RUTH LUDWIG

WHEN we hear about exporting American "know-how" to Israel, automatically we envisage dams, new machinery, new methods of distribution and merchandising. However, it is in a special field having little to do with technology or industry, that of applied social research, that one of the most interesting transfers of American method to the Israeli scene has been made.

During the last few decades the social sciences in America have expanded enormously, particularly in their application to practical problems of business, government, and administration. The road to a new understanding of social relationships has been opened by studies of behavior and reactions, by deeper systematic insight into the motivations of people, and by exact measurement of their attitudes. There has been an especially impressive development of new techniques for ascertaining public opinion, additionally spurred in the past two years by the failure of old techniques in respect to the 1948 presidential election.

BEN GURION was one of the first in Israel to realize the important help the methods of modern social science might provide in coping with the urgent problems to be faced by a new state. Shortly before the State of Israel was established, he welcomed Professor Louis Guttman, associate professor of sociology at Cornell University and a leading figure in the field of attitude measurement in this country, who had come to Jerusalem to work out ways of applying American techniques of study in Israel. Professor Guttman recognized the possibilities for improving and expanding research in a situation so fluid and so full of interesting problems, and also so different from anything in this country or Western Europe.

No less than sixty-one countries on every level of cultural and technological development are contributing to the growing population of Israel. Modern Western cultures clash with medieval ones, and all kinds of social tradition, family pattern, religious observance, and political opinion are represented in transition there. The problem of building a modern state out of such heterogeneous material is tremendous—and unprecedented. Relations between people and government are still new and have not yet fallen into any consistent pattern. The various government departments require much guidance in their work; research projects on urgent social questions would, it was felt, help the administrator to anticipate the consequences of his decisions. Public opinion polls would let him know what people were thinking, and also per-

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AMONG other more publicized imports from the United States, Israel has also taken over some of the new techniques of "public opinion" research which have expanded so enormously in this country in recent years, particularly in their relation to problems of government and administration. RUTH LUDWIG, a citizen of Israel and at present the United States representative of the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, here describes the activities of that organization in opinion polling and what it has so far been able to discover of the ideas and temper of the population of the new state. Miss Ludwig has a doctorate in sociology and economics from Heidelberg University and has written for the *New York Times Magazine*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and various Israeli periodicals. She is the author of two books: *Industrial Budgeting* (1932) and *Kinnereth* (1938), a novel of life on a Palestinian collective farm.

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mit the people to participate in the shaping of their own future.

The question of whether the death penalty should be incorporated into the new code being prepared by the Ministry of Justice was the subject of much discussion and doubt. A new system of austerity regulations had to be worked out. The government wished to know to what extent its position on unrestricted immigration had popular support. On these and many other questions, polls have been held that have provided administrators and legislators with valuable information. Moreover, such surveys are encouraging the thousands of people who are questioned, and who hear and read about the polls, to take a more active part in public affairs and to think harder about them.

In addition to this, public opinion research might well give us an otherwise unobtainable picture of the unique and rapidly changing social composition of Israel. How do the opinions of inhabitants of the collective settlements, the *kibbutzim,* differ from those of city-dwellers? From those of independent farmers? Are there differences—and how acute are they—between old settlers and new settlers, between immigrants from Europe and from Asia and Africa? How strong are those differences between the young and the middle-aged about which we have heard so much?

After some time devoted to preparation and the training of a staff, Dr. Guttman founded, in January 1949, the government-sponsored Israel Institute of Applied Social Research.* The public opinion department of the Institute has already conducted seventeen polls, and full reports have been published in Hebrew; extracts from some polls, in English, appear in a new quarterly published by the Institute under the title *What Israel Thinks.*

PERHAPS the most important issue facing Israel in the past two years has been that of mass immigration. A poll on this subject was undertaken in August 1949, and the following questions were asked:

Should free mass immigration continue? Or should it be controlled? (The reference here was to general planning involving such procedures as examining and directing immigrants —not to the advisability of limiting the number of immigrants.)

Is the concentration of the new immigrants in the cities dangerous?

Should they be sent into agriculture, even if by putting a certain pressure on them?

Should immigrants of a doubtful moral record (criminals) be admitted?

To whom is the government to grant priority in providing jobs and settlement: new immigrants or ex-soldiers?

The real issue, as one can see, was (and still is): to what extent are Israelis willing to share their limited wealth with penniless immigrants —in unlimited number? The answers to these questions were emphatic, and the intensity of feeling of the respondents was, as measured, high.*

Eighty-two per cent held that the arrival of the immigrants should be systematically prepared for and planned by the government, while 18 per cent thought that immigration ought to be absolutely free, not guided or supervised in any way. A majority of 81 per cent saw a danger in the concentration of immigrants in the cities. Eighty-one per cent thought that ex-soldiers should have priority over new immigrants in employment and settlement facilities; and 55 per cent wanted to oblige newcomers to enter agriculture if they were suited for it.

* The Institute is under the direction of Dr. Guttman and of Dr. Uriel Foa, formerly of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and it has a staff of twenty persons, among them expert statisticians, psychologists, and sociologists; in addition, there are about thirty part-time field workers. The activities of the Institute include public opinion polling; special studies of acute social problems; market research and studies of consumer habits; psychological testing; and basic research for all these fields.

* Two to three thousand people are questioned in each poll. To a great extent the reliability of its results depends on the sampling procedure, and the various procedures are still a matter of controversy. The Israel Institute is in the fortunate position of having access to the official lists of the first national census of November 1948, when all eligible voters for the first general elections were registered. This permits the use of what is unquestionably the best method of selecting a sample for a poll: list sampling. The field workers are specially trained to insure the right approach to the respondents and to avoid bias. Since a great part of the more recently arrived population does not yet speak Hebrew fluently, the field worker has to be multilingual, although the questionnaire is eventually filled out in Hebrew. A field worker makes two to three return visits; the selected respondent cannot be replaced by another. All Israeli polls measure not only content but also intensity of conviction and feeling according to the method of scale analysis devised by Dr. Guttman at Cornell University and during his service in the research branch of the United States Army. (This method is not yet in general use in this country.)

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The attitudes of the collective settlers, private farmers, and town-dwellers showed marked differences; each group emphasized different points in its answers. The members of the collective settlements are concerned primarily to have priority of immigration given members of the Zionist pioneer movements: these immigrants have had both agricultural and military training while still abroad, and should from the first be an asset, rather than an initial burden, to the settlements. However, the settlers insist that—notwithstanding these priorities—immigration as a whole should be absolutely free.

The private farmer stresses quite different points. He is most insistent that the moral record of the immigrant be scrutinized. Secondly, he feels that Zionist propaganda abroad should avoid painting too rosy a picture of Israel lest newcomers be disappointed. And finally, he stresses the necessity of a physical examination of the immigrants before, and not after, immigration. In general, the private farmer shows a tendency to be more cautious than the collective settler—which would tend to show that independent farmers are very much alike all over the world.

The town-dweller takes a position closer to the collective settler's than to the private farmer's. One reason for this may be that such a great number of the townspeople are workers, or dependents of workers, who have more in common ideologically with the kibbutzim.

A breakdown by countries of origin also showed differences. Israeli citizens of German origin take a more favorable view of controlled immigration than do those from other countries:

Country of origin	*In favor of some control*
Germany	90%
Israeli-born	80%
Poland	80%
Russia	79%
Rumania	75%

One set of data is not easy to interpret. On the question whether soldiers or immigrants should get priority in settlement, we find the following differences among those coming from different countries.

Origin	*Priority for ex-soldiers*	*Priority for new immigrants*
Israeli-born	75%	25%
Poland	81%	19%
Rumania	82%	18%
Russia	83%	17%
Germany	84%	16%

The Israeli-born are apparently more anxious than the rest of the country to favor new immigrants over ex-soldiers.

The question as to the admittance of immigrants with a doubtful moral past was asked at a time when excitement over the Stanley case had not yet died down. Sidney Stanley, a British Jew guilty of embezzlement, had been expelled by Britain and had applied for an Israeli visa. There were interesting differences on this question between town and country:

	In favor of admittance	*Against*
Tel Aviv	59%	41%
Haifa	54%	46%
Private farmers	36%	64%
Collective settlements	29%	71%

THIS first questionnaire on mass immigration did not raise the fundamental question: whether the number of immigrants should be restricted or not. At the time the poll was held, it was unlikely any Israeli Jew would have favored any limitation of the number of those whose arrival all had, for years, longed and prayed for. Three months later, however, the situation had changed, and the immigration problem again became the subject of a poll. By that time the full impact of the wave of new immigrants had been felt, and economic crisis theatened the country. The questions asked were:

Shall we restrict the number of immigrants in order to overcome the crisis?

Are there other means of overcoming the crisis besides reducing immigration?

What would be a desirable number of immigrants for the coming year?

The results showed that 75 per cent of the population was opposed to restricting immigration. On the question as to the desirable number of immigrants for the coming year, only 26 per cent proposed specific figures. Fifty-seven per cent said there was no need to limit the number, and 17 per cent said they had not pondered the question. At the end of each interview, respondents were asked: "How many immigrants arrived, in your opinion, during the last three months? During the current year?" The answers showed that the majority of the public was not aware of the correct figures.

The differences among different occupational

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groups are small but interesting. The figures show that those favoring unrestricted immigration number 88 per cent of the unskilled workers, 81 per cent of the members of collective colonies, 79 per cent of the skilled workers, 76 per cent of the civil servants, 73 per cent of the independent entrepreneurs, 70 per cent of the housewives, and 66 per cent of the free professions. Opinions on free or restricted immigration were clear, assured, and decided. Those favoring restriction showed a slightly higher intensity of feeling than those against it.

While the country as a whole seems to be strongly united on the issue of free immigration, when it comes to the question of the economic measures necessary to absorb immigrants—austerity—we find that social divisions are much sharper. The austerity regime, as a consequence of mass immigration, was officially introduced in Israel in the late summer of 1949. The government wanted to know how the people would support these unpopular measures, and a poll was taken in early autumn. The people already knew life under austerity but had as yet experienced it neither for any length of time nor in its most drastic forms.

The poll revealed that 58 per cent of the population was in favor of introducing austerity. But there were very striking differences among the different occupational groups. Those favoring austerity included:

46% of the owners of shops or factories;
58% of the skilled workers;
61% of the civil servants;
66% of the unskilled workers;
76% of the collective farmers.

And while 76 per cent of the inhabitants of rural areas favored austerity, only 53 per cent of the inhabitants of Tel Aviv favored it. Interestingly enough, Haifa, Israel's working-class city, was 62 per cent for austerity. In general, on questions where the interest of the individual has to be subordinated to the common good of the nation, the settlements and the city of Haifa very often head the list in expressions of willingness for self-sacrifice.

THE response to the questions considered above were affected by economic interests. Answers to other questions, however, were swayed by strong political allegiances.

In the summer of 1949 a poll was taken on the attitudes of the people to three salient factors in Israel's foreign policy: Israel's membership in the UN; the loan from the United States; and the armistice agreement signed with Egypt at Rhodes. The replies showed that 80 per cent saw in Israel's admission to the UN an important political achievement strengthening her international position; 20 per cent thought it would have been better to have waited for the signing of peace treaties with the Arab countries before joining the UN. On this question, a certain number of people were not very decided and had a tendency to change their opinions.

Eighty per cent thought that the government had done well to obtain a loan from the United States; 20 per cent wondered whether this would not endanger Israel's national independence. For the 20 per cent giving critical replies, the delicate problem of keeping neutrality between the West and Russia, and fears of becoming a "sphere of influence," came to the fore. Such an attitude is somewhat typical of a young nation emerging from a long experience as a colonial ward. On this question, opinions were quite decided and did not seem likely to change quickly.

Eighty-one per cent saw a political achievement in the armistice treaty with Egypt; 19 per cent thought it meant a setback. On this question opinion was emphatic and intense.

It is most interesting to observe that the opposition to all three of the government's steps showed almost exactly the same percentage of the total. However, while the statistical breakdown for the first two questions did not show great differences among various groups, except that the city of Tel Aviv led in favorable replies, the answers to the question on the agreement with the Egyptian treaty showed marked variations. The youngest age group was cooler toward the armistice than the older (62 per cent of the 18-20 age group favored it, against 89 per cent of the 46-50 age group). Differences among the various types of communal settlements were even greater—and politically more revealing. Favoring the armistice with Egypt were:

Kibbutz Artzi (the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim, associated with the anti-government Mapam), 37%;
Kibbutz Meuhad (center), 77%;
Kibbutz Dati (Orthodox), 87%;
Hever Hakvutzot (center), 96%.

ONE cannot but wonder how decisively these differences in attitudes and opinions are affected by party allegiances. It is well known

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that these play a great role in determining the opinions of the Israeli citizen. Party discipline is strong in the Orthodox bloc, in the left-wing socialist party (Mapam), in the right-wing Herut, and also in the Labor party (Mapai), which is the largest. Unfortunately, we do not know the voting behavior or party membership of those questioned in the polls (except in those cases where we deal with a very small homogeneous community, as in the left-wing or the religious kibbutzim). We do, however, have some data on party influence in two polls that touched a sensitive nerve in Orthodox circles—polls dealing with equal rights for women and with their military conscription in peacetime.

According to rabbinical law, women have extremely limited rights, and to this very day when a woman appears before a rabbinical court on matters of inheritance, succession, divorce, and so on, the inferiority of her status becomes strikingly evident. The official status of women in the state, however, grants them the greatest possible freedom and full equality. The Orthodox element views this with misgivings, and when the questions of equal rights for women and of their conscription arose, the issue between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox was sharply drawn.

In the country as a whole, it turned out that 52.5 per cent were in favor of the military conscription of women in peacetime. The breakdown by professions revealed (the percentage indicates the number approving conscription):

Rabbis and other religious workers	0%
Unskilled workers	23%
Manufacturers and shop owners	35%
Skilled workers	52%
Free professions	53%
Civil servants	58%
Housewives	60%
Members of collective settlements	81%

A map was drawn indicating the distribution of voters for the Orthodox parties in the last election, and it appeared from this that the vote against conscription almost exactly coincided with the vote for the religious parties.

Polls often help us go far deeper into the social psychology of a people, and its different strata, than a sample listing of political opinions would suggest. A poll was taken in September 1949 on the question of the death penalty. The new state had to answer the question: what was to be the highest punishment it could mete out? There is a growing tendency among nations to limit the application of capital punishment or even to abolish it altogether. To a question like this, public opinion attaches special importance. When the legislators of Israel had to take a decision on this subject, there was no precedent or habit of former law to indicate a course. Considerations other than that of public opinion may move the legislator, but a clear knowledge of the people's stand would no doubt put him in a much better position to decide on issues such as this. The results of a poll taken in September 1949 showed that 75 per cent of the Israelis were against the death penalty, while 25 per cent were in favor of it. However, more than 50 per cent wanted to see it applied only in one case, that of high treason and espionage.

The intensity of feeling measured was high; the answers were clear-cut and decided.

Interesting differences of opinion were observed between the new immigrants and the old settlers; the longer a person had been in Israel the more inclined he was to abolish the death penalty. The breakdown of those opposed to the death penalty shows:

Less than one year in Israel	63%
1-2 years	66%
3-5 years	68%
6-10 years	72%
11-19 years	77%
20 years and more	78%
Born in Israel	77%

The last figure, on the Israeli-born, who are mostly still young, shows them closer to the middle-aged and older immigrants than to those of their own generation among the newcomers. This is further illustrated by a breakdown into age groups. The 18-20 age group showed as few as 62 per cent against the death penalty, while among those over fifty years of age, 79 per cent expressed themselves as against it.

No great differences could be observed among groups based on other breakdowns. Nine months after this poll was published the Knesset passed the second reading of the law abolishing capital punishment.

Public opinion surveys are only one part of the activities of the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. A special department is devoted to research on large-scale problems that

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require more than a poll for adequate study. This department at present has under way twelve projects.

The first comprehensive study of the special department was begun early last year, and deals with the social adjustment of new immigrants in Israel, covering such aspects as immigrants' plans for the future, the nature of their present work, their satisfaction with their jobs, their adjustment to the local population, their knowledge of Israel, the social distance and tensions among people of different countries of origin. Such matters as religion, problems of leisure time, relations to government and other officialdom, parent-child relations, and problems of personal adjustment are also investigated. The study compares new immigrants still in the reception camps with those already settled outside. Samples of 3,000 cases in both categories have been designed for cross sections of both these populations. A third sample of 2,000 cases has already been taken from the older population, so that the adjustment of the newcomers can be compared with that of settled Israelis. Work on this study is partly finished.

A number of other research projects of the Institute are in various stages of progress:

A study of the relations between religion and state deals with the age-old problem of church and state in its present Israeli version. It analyzes the various traditions of Jewish communities from different countries of origin, their influence upon Israeli social conditions, and the relations between religion and modern Jewish life. A preliminary study on the rabbinate has been undertaken by an American scholar.

Another young American scientist working for an American doctorate was at the Israel Institute making a comparative study of personality growth in the communal settlements and in the cities. A number of American scientists use the facilities of the Institute for projects of their own in which they need material that the Institute can supply: for instance, an experienced clinical psychologist on the staff of the Institute has conducted a series of "deep" biographical interviews (in Hebrew) for a study that has been undertaken in America where the Israeli material is being used for the elaboration of certain points.

A special research section is being developed for a social survey of Israel's Arabs. The 200,000 Arabs now in Israel have lost social contact with their fellow Arabs and have not yet become adjusted to living among their Jewish fellow citizens within the new state. The first survey will study their contacts with Jews, their attitudes toward Israel and toward the Arab states, their changed economic status, leadership structure, morale, their plans, worries, needs, and their aspirations for the future. The survey will facilitate the readjustment of this minority. The Arab section will also specialize in race relations, prejudice research, cultures, traditions, and related problems.

The Ministry of Education has commissioned an intensive study of educational methods in schools. The research team working on this project will also study the attitudes, plans, and problems of Israeli youth.

Other projects of the Institute deal with health problems, juvenile delinquency, the social aspects of housing, and the relations between the people and the state. Market research and surveys of consumer habits investigate conditions in the whole Middle East as well as Israel.

In the field of psychometrics, original tests are being devised for the use of the personnel department of the Israel Treasury, which is responsible for the hiring of civil servants and promotion in all ranks. The newly devised tests of the Institute will also be used by the Israel civil service commission.

THE Institute keeps in close contact with American universities and research institutes, particularly in the field of basic, or methodological, theory; it exchanges material with research bodies in European countries, and in Japan, where the United States occupation army has set up an institute similar in structure to the Israeli organization.

Several new theories on measuring techniques for socio-psychological data have been developed by Dr. Guttman and Dr. Foa during the last three years. Dr. Guttman was recently in the United States, lecturing to social scientists at leading universities on his new findings relating to the shortening of questionnaires while retaining strict scientific standards, and also relating to the measurement of social status and of the intensity of feeling of respondents.

In this way, the Israel Institute, which owes so much to American science and proficiency, is now developing to a point where it will be in the position to make its own original contribution to that wide field of basic theory and applied knowledge which was conceived and developed in this country.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Private Investment in Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Hal Lehrman's articles in your issues of March and May on private investments in Israel are a welcome and valuable contribution to the clarification of a subject about which many people talk, few people write, and which nobody until Mr. Lehrman has made an attempt to present to the American public in an exhaustive and dispassionate study. . . .

But I am afraid Mr. Lehrman has not always succeeded in retaining his objectivity. In the first article there is at least one place where he goes too far in minimizing the socialist character of Israel's economy. In his second article, there are passages where he uncritically accepts the propaganda of the chief opposition party, the General Zionists, and there is an innuendo that it takes great moral courage to criticize the government of Israel. I consider that innuendo the crudest instance of acceptance of opposition propaganda. To my knowledge, no journalist has suffered martyrdom for criticizing the Israeli government. I saw some of the strictures expressed by Mr. Lehrman in Commentary appear in the official Mapai daily *Hador* as far back as the winter of 1948-49. . . .

Now to be specific.

. . . Mr. Lehrman presents both the objections to Histadrut's position as given by the opposition and the apologia offered by the leaders of the Labor Federation. But . . . it is not enough to present both sides of the argument, giving most space to the side that talks most and talks best—in this case, the opposition. The matter requires independent investigation. Let me offer a piece of pertinent evidence upon which I happened to stumble: in the Haifa Bay region, among the manufacturer-tenants of the Bayside Land Corporation (a subsidiary of the Palestine Economic Corporation), I found one manager after another who told me that they had received such substantial allocations from the American loan that they were able to revolutionize their methods of manufacturing and bring it up to American standards of efficiency; Weigert Chemicals, Gusinski, Palestine Electric Wire Corporation, Ady-Tamidor, and some others. They are all private enterprises.

Mr. Lehrman mentioned the Palestine Economic Corporation and the now defunct Israel Corporation, but he failed to mention the fact that the PEC, while doing splendid work in Israel, has grown exceedingly slowly in the past thirty years; and that the Israel Corporation, sponsored by the ZOA, tried to move too fast, using mass-meeting techniques for enlisting private capital, and failed miserably. Had the American proponents of private enterprise in Israel shown themselves more dynamic than the PEC or more skillful and less inclined to tangle economics with internal Israeli politics than the Israel Corporation, perhaps the picture in Israel would have been more favorable. It is unfair to leave the reader with the impression that most of the blame rests with organized labor. That is the General Zionist line—both here and in Israel.

Mr. Lehrman insists on tacking on the label of "liberal" to the General Zionists in Israel. What type of "liberal"? . . . I don't find most leaders and many of the rank and file of the General Zionists in Israel liberal, although their leading allies in America are. . . . Mr. Lehrman himself finds the manufacturers and managers in Israel, as a class, old-fashioned in their production methods. Does it not occur to him that the same may apply to their interpretation of liberalism?

Mr. Lehrman makes much—and rightly in my opinion—of the poor organization, and inability or unreadiness to delegate authority and to define authority, in the Israeli government. . . . One can also read such criticism into Mr. Lehrman's references to private concerns in Israel. . . . Yet Mr. Lehrman seems to have swallowed the propaganda line that once the General Zionists get a larger voice in the government, everything will be better. Yet suppose, in the coming coalition, the place of Mr. Eliezer Kaplan, the socialist, is taken by the top leader of the General Zionists, Israel Rokach. . . . Will there be any improvement in administration? Both men . . . are stolid and unimaginative and share the national Israeli traits of inability to delegate authority and to know how to speak to one who does not share their views.

On the whole, a coalition between Mapai and General Zionists is probably inevitable and is likely to do much good. But that is due more to the pressure of historic forces over which neither

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party has much control than to any inherent virtues of the so-called "liberal" General Zionists, who seem to have found their way into Mr. Lehrman's heart.

May I repeat that despite these criticisms, I consider Mr. Lehrman's study an extremely valuable contribution to the discussion of this very important subject.

M. Z. FRANK

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Frank invites me to clarify my use of "liberal." Perhaps he will forgive me if I invite him to clarify his use of "objectivity."

Mr. Frank chides me for not having made "independent investigation" in Israel. It was precisely because I did—after seeking and recording all sides of a complex problem with some sense of balance, I hope—that I could regard the prospect of a possible Mapai-General Zionist coalition as favorable for Israel's future. This is a judgment which Mr. Frank's own independent investigation evidently leads him to share (though I find his "pressures of historic forces" rather vague as an explanation).

If Mr. Frank were to disagree with my appraisal of low Israeli productivity, or administrative efficiency, or any other non-political obstacle to investment, I could argue with him. But the points he chooses to make are not so much in disagreement with me as with some of the sources I consulted and included in my analysis. Indeed, a rereading will show, I think, that most of Mr. Frank's own opinions are contained in my survey. I trust that the mere stating of any group's "propaganda line" where it seems relevant is not quite the same as being obsessed by it. Would Mr. Frank consider me more objective if the Mapai line had found its "way" more deeply into my "heart" than other lines?

On points of fact, I detect only two items in Mr. Frank's catalogue sufficiently tangible for me to come to grips with. (1) I am unaware that I made any "innuendo" about the hazards of criticizing the Israeli government; quite the contrary, the May article (pp. 445-6) said ". . . there is no control, or sign of it, on criticism of government and Histadrut." (2) As for noting Mapai's powers of self-criticism: instead of citing *Hador,* a Mapai publication (for which I myself have had the honor of writing several articles), I cited *Asmoret,* another Mapai publication.

May I hasten to add that I am sincerely grateful for Mr. Frank's generous appreciation of my report, and in particular for the amiable tone of his critical comment.

HAL LEHRMAN

New York City

Communized Nazis

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with great interest the article by Béla Fabian in the May issue of COMMENTARY about the ex-fascists now serving in Communist governments in Hungary and Rumania. When I was in Germany during the past summer I was told of many instances, both in East and West Germany, where former Nazis had been taken into Communist circles with open arms. Obviously it is deliberate Communist strategy.

Dr. Fabian's article should be most helpful in leading many people to see that totalitarianism is essentially the same whether Communist, fascist, or Nazi. I believe you have performed a real service by printing this article.

WILLARD JOHNSON

The National Conference
of Christians and Jews
New York City

The Israel Symphony in Chicago

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Chemjo Vinaver's article on the tour of the Israel Symphony Orchestra in the May issue expressed the sentiments of many thousands of Jewish music lovers throughout the country. . . . I and many others in Chicago tried to get at least one major Jewish composition on the two programs. But all protests were of no avail and Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky it had to be. Finally, Leonard Bernstein made a little speech and said that he had received many requests for Jewish music and gave us an encore of a few minutes. . . .

SAMUEL LEDERMAN

Chicago, Illinois

The Frieder Novel Prize

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

May I extend an invitation to contributors and readers of COMMENTARY to participate in the $5,000 Frieder Literary Award for the best novel or biography on a Jewish theme? The contest, which is open to all, requires only that the novel be written in English and be at least 75,000 words in length. Closing date for the Frieder Literary Award is November 15, 1951.

The Frieder Literary Award has been made possible through the generosity of Alexander Frieder, Jewish communal and business leader of Cincinnati. The contest is sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, central body of Liberal Judaism. Rinehart and Company, publishers, are cooperating in the project and will publish the winning manuscript.

Judges in the contest are Norman Mailer,

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author of *The Naked and the Dead;* Fannie Hurst, noted novelist and short-story writer; and John A. Selby, editor in chief of Rinehart.

Author of the winning manuscript will receive an outright prize of $3,000 and an advance of $2,000 against future royalties. Further remuneration may accrue from the sale of dramatic, motion picture, radio, and other rights. For certificates of entry please write: The Frieder Award Committee, 3 East 65th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

MURRAY KASS

Union of American Hebrew Congregations
New York City

Park Forest

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article on Park Forest by Herbert J. Gans in the April COMMENTARY exemplified a refreshing departure from the turgid and misleading phraseology customary in much Jewish preaching and Jewish writing. Eschewing the usual grandiloquence about "the mission of Israel," "Jewish survival" . . . and the like, the article comes down to the solid actualities of contemporary Jewish existence—a bracing, cooling breeze in a sultry atmosphere. . . .

ABRAHAM CRONBACH

Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, Ohio

A Note on the Four Sons

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his interesting article "What Does the Seder Celebrate?" in the April issue of COMMENTARY, Theodor Gaster points out how "even the illustrations of the older Haggadah editions conspire to create a picture of the entire stretch of Jewish history. The wicked son is simply a Roman centurion; the one who is too young to ask is taken directly from an earlier print of a slave in supplication before Hannibal."

Since this reference alludes to an article of mine cited by Dr. Gaster in his Passover book, I would like to add a few words about these illustrations.

The figures of the soldier in Roman armor, and of what actually is "Hannibal swearing eternal hatred for Rome," were taken from engravings by Matthaeus Merian in J. L. Gottfried's *Historische Chronica,* Frankfort, 1657. They appear in the Haggadah printed in 1695 in Amsterdam. The figure of Hannibal (who was nine years old at the time of the event portrayed) was chosen because the gesture of the hands expresses the notion of a child who does not know how to ask. For similar reasons the figure in the Merian volume of David bending his head while receiving the anointing oil was used for the dull son.

However, in adapting the figure of a soldier for the wicked son the Haggadah illustrator was not attracted merely by the appropriate gesture or posture; he followed a tradition. The wicked son . . . was portrayed in the medieval Haggadah as a German *Landsknecht* or a Moorish warrior. . . .

There still remains the question of how the concept of the four sons of the Haggadah originated. . . . Perhaps this concept was patterned upon the four types of pupils in *Pirke Abot* (Sayings of the Fathers). . . . Here four possible combinations of the ability to learn and retain learning are distinguished: learning fast, forgetting fast; learning slow, forgetting slow; learning fast, forgetting slow; learning slow, forgetting fast.

The Haggadah author, no doubt an able teacher, concerned as he was with the ability of the child to pose purposive and leading questions at the Seder ceremony to be duly answered by the father, rated the son who in Exodus 13:14 rather awkwardly and inarticulately asks: "What is this?" as dull, and most ingeniously assumed that the explanation of the meaning of Passover given by the father in Exodus 13:8, without being asked to do so, implies the presence of a child that does not know how to ask. Thus out of a teacher's mind sprung up the four sons of the Haggadah: the bright, the uncooperative, the dull, and the little child.

RACHEL WISCHNITZER

New York City

The Tune of "Hatikvah"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to inform you that the "tune of uncertain origin" to which the words of "Hatikvah" were written, mentioned in your interesting article about Imber ("The Bohemian Who Wrote Hatikvah," January), is the tune of a very old Rumanian popular song:

Maize, with thy leaves high
Gone you are, and gone forever. . . .

(Cucuruz cu Pana'n sus
Dusu-mi-te-ai si te-ai dus. . . .)

Imber had lived in Rumania and must have known this popular tune. (Smetana's similar melody is probably only a reminiscence of the Rumanian song.)

HENRY MARCUS

Jerusalem, Israel

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Lapse of a Novelist

BARBARY SHORE. By NORMAN MAILER. Rinehart. 312 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM BARRETT

THE war gave Norman Mailer a very good novel in *The Naked and the Dead.* This is not meant to be any reflection upon his talents, which showed themselves in that book to be extraordinary, but only a simple observation of the fact that the situation of war could help the American novelist solve that most drastic of his problems: the attempt to cope with the vast formless and heterogeneous welter of American life and American characters. The war threw all manner of individuals together, bound them tightly in the common life of some military unit, exposed always to the primitive facts of courage, suffering, and death; and the novelist dealing with any such unit could get a cross section of American life that the civilian novelist could hardly hope for. When pushed, the war novelist had always, too, the effective recourse to the excitement and drama of sheer physical action. Thus Mailer made the most of his opportunity and wrote what is, so far as I know, the best novel by an American about the Second World War. After finishing the book, one wondered whether he could go on from this initial success to solve equally well the problems of the civilian novelist.

This, his second novel, gives a dishearteningly negative answer to that question. *Barbary Shore* is a failure as a novel, and all the more dismal a failure when compared with the virtues of *The Naked and the Dead.* And yet, paradoxically enough, this is in many respects a much smoother technical performance than *The Naked and the Dead,* which was often crude and stumbling in its writing. Mailer has here a better control of pace, his narrative moves more smoothly and tightly, and the passages of gauche banality are not in evidence. But that is about all that can be said by way of favorable comparison with the first novel; for where *The Naked and the Dead* triumphed, despite any crudities of writing, by the sense of raw life that Mailer was able to get across, the failure of the present work is precisely its final deficiency in life. At the end, nothing remains from one's reading of it; the whole substance of the book evaporates into a kind of ghostly unreality.

Since Mailer has attempted here to write a political and ideological novel, a genre that is fast becoming a dominant one in this century, the reasons for his failure take us into some fundamental questions about politics and literature that it will be worthwhile examining.

THE action of the novel centers around a handful of characters in a rooming house in Brooklyn Heights, where the hero, Michael Lovett, a young man who has been in the war, has settled to write his novel. He remembers the war from time to time only as some vague and unreal nightmare from which he is trying to awaken, and it is characteristic of the ghostliness that Mailer tries to inject into his story that the war should hover so dimly in the background, as if the author himself were also forgetting all the virtues of his first novel. Lovett's neighbors in the rooming house are: McLeod, an ex-Communist and GPU agent, who has dropped out of the party, gone underground, and finally turns up as a convert to Trotskyism (the real thing, and not the customary Communist version of it); and Hollingsworth, who is discovered eventually to be an agent of the FBI, but who looks, at his first appearance, like any number of those rather weird corn-fed Midwestern youths one can find around almost any metropolitan YMCA. The female complement are: a schizophrenic young bohemian, Lannie Madison, whom Mailer deploys for some vague dramatic purposes as a kind of crazed Ophelia of the Trotskyite movement; and the landlady, Guinevere, an ex-burlesque queen, a woman of ample and lusty proportions, but also narcissistic and frigid, who turns out toward the end of the novel to be the secret wife of McLeod—perhaps a just retribution for his former activities in the GPU. The plot concerns Hol-

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lingsworth's efforts to extract, with the kind of patient inhumanity of the GPU itself, a confession of some secrets from McLeod. The very plain implication of this is, of course, that the United States, as shown by its use of an FBI, is fundamentally no different as a society from Soviet Russia.

Neither these weird goings-on in the rooming house nor the characters themselves succeed in being altogether believable. Mailer wanted to invest his story with all the shadows of melodrama, but it never comes down to earth like good melodrama; and his characters, whom he has tried to make grotesques, never have that richness of life that alone can save the grotesque from being pasteboard caricature. The characters are not without their stirrings of life: Hollingsworth and Guinevere are good ideas for characters, never fully worked out, and at the first appearance of Lannie, I had the shock of recognition of one of those vacuous and haunted faces in Greenwich Village. But these stirrings of life never sprout, something has happened in the author to choke off their growth. The last thing it would seem to be is failure of talent: Mailer gives enough indications that he has a sufficient grip on these people to do something with them. But in this novel he is just too perplexed by the concerns of world history to attend to the novelist's normal business of giving life to his own creations. The novel itself lets you know in no uncertain terms that Mailer is more interested in his ideology than his people: for the real climax comes, not with any dramatic revelation of emotion or situation, but with McLeod's long tirade analyzing the present political state of mankind and its hopes for the future.

Now, for the novelist to sacrifice life for ideology is bad enough in any case, but when the ideology is a poor one, the fault becomes nothing short of a disaster. Mailer has, I think, considerably more talent as a novelist than Arthur Koestler; yet when Koestler gives up the novel to ideology, he usually manages to pull off something journalistically brilliant because his politics is intelligent, informed, and relevant. Mailer's radicalism, on the other hand, is hardly more than an adolescent daydream, and a very misleading one in its own political terms. The world, he finds, is now divided between the two colossi, Russia and the United States, both of which represent something he calls "State Capitalism," and in the conflict between the two there is no rational ground for choosing either side. The part of political wisdom is to wait for some resurgence of a revolutionary proletariat that will overthrow both giants.

ALL of this is the familiar Trotskyite line about a "third camp," and it is probably out of place in this review to go into any detailed refutation of it. "State Capitalism" is a large empty abstraction that describes neither the economy of the United States nor that of the USSR. The protagonist, who is also the narrator of the story, tells us that he is haunted by a youthful imagi-

Church and State in the United States

by

DR. ANSON PHELPS STOKES

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nation of one moment in history when the proletariat in Petrograd crawled to glory under the belly of a Cossack's horse. Mailer seems to be remembering here Trotsky's account, in his *History of the Russian Revolution,* of the mass demonstration that set off the February Revolution (notice, not the October Revolution). This is the kind of heroic political dream we used to nourish ourselves with when we were kids in the 30's. The proletariat never crawled to glory except in the pages of Trotsky's book, which must be judged from what we now know as nothing less than a romance and a falsification of the Russian Revolution. The February Revolution was defeated by the Bolshevik coup of October, and the possibility of political democracy was in turn defeated as early as January 1918 with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. After all the totalitarian rule in this century (most of it with a mass base), only a very stubbornly wishful intransigence can permit anyone to go on cultivating the old *mystique* of the proletariat. The important questions are: who directs the proletariat? under what political form? and with what preservation of decency in the ordinary ways of life?

This last throws an altogether different light on Mailer's politics. After all, one can't demand that a novelist (even a political novelist) be an expert in economics and history, but one does require that he have an imagination for the concrete facts of daily life. And from this point of view, surely Mailer must know that there is an abyss of difference between life in the United States and in the USSR, and that it is the worst kind of foolishness to say there is no choice between these two ways of life. It is a mark of the degree to which Mailer has let sweeping abstractions run away with his novelistic gifts that he should never seem to see the problem in these ordinary terms. No doubt, the FBI in some of its current operations needs some judicial and legislative check or review, but it is empty fantasy to assert, or imply, that the ordinary American in his daily life is surrendered to the mercy of this agency in the way that the ordinary Russian lives in the shadow of Stalin's secret police.

But all this political argumentation only brings us now to what is, I believe, the central point about the political novel. The risk the political novelist takes is not so much that his politics will be false, as that, to put it rather paradoxically, he will take politics itself too seriously. The greatest political novels have been written by men who were disabused with politics or at least saw in it something partial and subordinate, something that did not exhaust the content of life. (Even apart from the novel, this may be the best way to regard politics if one is to avoid political fanaticism: the great heritage of Anglo-Saxon liberalism is precisely that political democracy is a necessary instrument for securing certain goods, and not a *mystique.*) Dostoevsky, Stendhal, and Henry James are examples from the 19th century. In this century the most successful political novelists have been André Malraux and Ignazio Silone. Malraux has produced in *Man's Fate* what is probably the best of the Marxist novels; yet Marxism was only one ingredient in the work, whose dramatic effect was achieved by a tension between the immense Oriental sense of human destiny and Malraux's Western and Nietzschean notions of tragic action and tragic courage. (From the beginning there was always more Nietzsche than Marx in Malraux's thinking.) Silone's novels were carried largely by a sense of the realities of peasant life which drew their sustenance from an antique Christianity.

The point, in short, is that wherever the writer succeeds in this difficult genre, it is because he finds the sources of feeling in human realities deeper than politics, so that life appears in his pages as life and not a mere political or dialectical blueprint. If Arthur Koestler's brilliant novels look so thin beside the great examples of this genre, it is precisely because they are intellectual and only intellectual, and therefore have no deep roots in the substance of life that has always been the subject matter of literature. Of course, in this period politics has become the chief arena of human destiny, and our writers will inevitably be drawn into dealing with it. But the political novelist had better have an eye to watching that he is not driven by the same motives that now lead so many people into their political passions and faiths: the age is so emotionally thin and dried up that people switch into politics emotions that should go elsewhere.

Still, no comment on this book should conclude on a purely negative note. *The Naked and the Dead* was not a freak, and the present work gives abundant indications of Mailer's talents. Moreover, Mailer has a stubborn integrity, and he can be counted on to escape the American blight of the broad and easy path after an early success. If he is suffering here

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from the youthful growing pains of integrity, his stubbornness is such that it can push him on to something more mature. The present book may very well be only a momentary regrouping of forces before his reconnaissance moves forward again into the enemy country.

An Introduction to Judaism

WHAT THE JEWS BELIEVE. By PHILIP S. BERNSTEIN. Farrar, Straus, and Young. 100 pp. $1.25.

Reviewed by ALFRED JOSPE

ONLY a man of courage could offer a streamlined version of living Judaism in one hundred pages, and only a wise man ought to try. Rabbi Philip Bernstein possesses enough of both qualities to justify the attempt.

In ten brief chapters, Rabbi Bernstein blocks out the major aspects of Judaism and Jewish life. He begins his presentation with an exposition of the meaning of Torah in Jewish life and of Judaism's central affirmation of the unity of God. He then portrays the Jewish heritage as it has found expression in the cycle of Sabbaths, holidays, and festivals as well as in the individual observances and group practices of the Jew. The last chapter contains the eloquent address Rabbi Bernstein delivered at the Bar Mitzvah of his son in Frankfort, Germany, in 1947, an occasion fraught with deep personal significance for the author.

Rabbi Bernstein writes with an impressive simplicity and lucidity, and he has hit upon a method that is very fruitful, one that is inductive rather than deductive. Most scholarly or popular presentations of Judaism, setting up a peremptory distinction between "theory" and "practice," start with an exposition of the theological foundations and fundamental affirmations of Jewish life and then proceed to a description of the individual and collective behavior patterns in which these concepts and affirmations are concretized. Rabbi Bernstein has reversed the procedure. He starts with the living and lived observances and uses their description as springboards for the exposition of Judaism's fundamental ideas. Thus the description of Yom Kippur leads into a discussion of Judaism's concept of the nature of man, the meaning of "sin," and the role and scope of charity in Jewish life. The Passover story sets the framework for a discussion of the problem of miracles, ancient Jewish nationhood, the "chosen people" concept, the idea of the "suffering servant," the Jewish attitude toward Jesus, current interfaith activities, Messianism, and Zionism. The transitions are skillfully managed and the linkage of such diverse elements never seems arbitrary.

AND yet, one cannot put this book aside without having noted several disquieting limitations. One of these limitations may be traced to the fact that the book is an expanded and partly revised version of an article published in *Life* magazine some months ago, to be read by a predominantly non-Jewish audience. This probably accounts for the exclusion of virtually all fundamental controversies and basic tensions within Judaism and for the excessive amount of attention paid to apologetics. While the absence of creedal elements in Jewish life is merely mentioned in one line and Jewish thinking about God is—inadequately—covered in three pages, five pages are devoted to an exposition of the Jewish attitude toward Jesus, more than three to an analysis of the Jewish attitude toward conversion. The motivation and scope of Jewish charitableness is described in detail, from the

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enumeration of Maimonides' "Eight Degrees of Charity" to a comparison of the amounts raised by the United Jewish Appeal and the American Red Cross in 1948. Even the number of Jewish chaplains serving during World War II is not missing. I do not mean to be petty. The information which Rabbi Bernstein presents is important. Yet the inordinate amount of space assigned to it gives an emphasis less to what the Jews believe and do than to why they don't believe and do otherwise.

The book's limitations become particularly evident in what it leaves unsaid. The book clearly is not meant for scholars, theologians, or the informed laity; it is designed to satisfy the needs of thoughtful Jews and non-Jews who seek an account of Jewish beliefs and practices unencumbered by theological detail and scholarly or pious verbiage. That there is a need and place for such an account will hardly be contested by any honest educator or religious leader who is engaged in the Gargantuan daily struggle with religious and cultural mass illiteracy. Yet how much can Judaism be "popularized" without robbing it of its distinct qualities?

Precisely because the book addresses itself to the uninformed but thoughtful reader, the reader, if he is thoughtful, will seek answers to a number of questions which are not posed at all or, if posed, inadequately answered. Thus the crucial problem offered by the absence of dogma in Judaism and the existing latitude of belief is disposed of with the simple statement that "there is no creed which all Jews accept." The fact is true. There are no final dogmatic formulations, and "there is no supreme ecclesiastical body with authority over the souls of the Jews." But what does this lack imply? What kind of authority, if any, is there in Jewish life? Are not precisely those Jews and non-Jews who sincerely seek information baffled especially by Judaism's theological and ecclesiastic libertarianism? An analysis of Judaism's aversion to formal creeds could have furnished a master key opening the door to the entire range of Jewish thought and life—the Jewish distrust of finality in any form, even of final assertions about God; the recognition that even our profoundest thoughts about God are still only man's thoughts and not God's; the fact that Jews are not simply congregants in a church but, as Milton Steinberg put it, "members of a historic people and participants in its culture"; the Jewish unwillingness to accept the *depositum fidei* as something completed but rather to regard it as something to be acquired and won ever anew through inquiry and study; the consequent intellectual emphasis of Jewish life and tradition which, in turn, is often subordinated to, and partly submerged in, the quest for the good life.

Other vital aspects of the Jewish heritage are treated in an equally sketchy manner. At times, there is an excessive amount of rationalization and slanting in the direction of "liberal" humanism. The meaning of Chanukah is reduced to the struggle for religious freedom. The humanitarian aspects of the Sabbath, important as they are, are overemphasized to the virtual exclusion of all other elements: creation, revelation, and redemption, which are fused into a unique synthesis in the Sabbath. Some important beliefs and concepts are omitted altogether—the covenant, the priesthood of Israel, the concept of ***kedushah*** (sanctification), the problem of evil (as distinguished from sin), the dietary laws, and other aspects of traditional observance about whose role and meaning people inquire consistently. Their omission in a magazine article is understandable; in a book, even in an elementary one, it can hardly be justified.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Bernstein's efforts command respect even where one disagrees with him and even though one would have wished for greater depth and completeness. The book is written with dignity and warmth. Despite its limitations, it can well serve as a stimulating and helpful introduction to Jewish thought and life for the audience to which it is addressed. But one hopes that its readers will heed Hillel's injunction: *"Zil g'mor,"* "Go and study—further."

The Role of Nazi Anti-Semitism

HOSTAGES OF CIVILISATION: THE SOCIAL SOURCES OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST ANTI-SEMITISM. By EVA G. REICHMANN. The Beacon Press. 281 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by NORBERT MUHLEN

THE catastrophe which overtook European Jewry between 1940 and 1945 has understandably caused many Jews to see in every manifestation of anti-Semitism a step on the road to new Auschwitzes and Dachaus. Were there not German writers who expounded anti-Semitic ideas long before Hitler? Did not some German politicians use anti-Semitic appeals for their

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David Riesman is a lawyer and sociologist now teaching at the University of Chicago. This volume was written in collaboration with Reuel Denney and Nathan Glazer.

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partisan ends? Did not some German organizations exclude Jews from membership? And did not all this lead finally to the gas chambers?

Dr. Reichmann has avoided such a misleading, sweeping simplification. A serious and careful historian, she is sharply aware that every historical event is the outcome of many causes on many levels. The anti-Semitic tendencies that existed in Germany from the Jewish emancipation to the time of Hitler were only one condition of the final outcome; had they not fitted in with a great many other causes, most of them based on the rather unique situation of Germany after the First World War, they would have petered out without leaving their mark on history—as happened, for instance, with the anti-Semitic fashion of French "Socialisme National" after the Franco-Prussian War of 1871. The historian who wants to explain rather than merely report events must disentangle the mingled threads of causation one by one. Although this method makes sometimes for rather hard going, Miss Reichmann follows it with conscientiousness.

For decades before Nazism, the groundwork of destruction was laid by the devaluation of the values in which preceding centuries had believed: love, charity, and brotherhood had ceded to the glorification of violence, of the superman, of the survival of the fittest. These new values gained ground in Germany from the turn of the century, and moral disintegration became conspicuously common after the First World War.

While tracing these changes in the mood of the time, Miss Reichmann stresses the fact that capitalism was almost universally hated by the Germans, who saw in modern competitive society only a source of frustration; and thus German nationalism grew up in radical hostility to the values of the bourgeois revolution: liberalism, modernism, and democratic progress. Where nationalism in Western Europe flowed into the general struggle of modern "liberation," in Germany the two currents never met.

In the German consciousness, the Jews were closely linked to the ideas of liberalism, reason, and democracy to which they owed their emancipation; to modern capitalism, which was the vehicle of their emancipation; and to the competitive society in which they rose and prospered. These ties almost automatically made them appear in German eyes as enemies of nationalism, or, as it was simplified, of the "national interest." Moreover, for a number of reasons inherent in Germany's unfortunate geography and history, German national consciousness suffered from a deep ambiguity; in spite of outward successes, Germans tended to have a deep-set sense of insecurity and weakness, a sickly distrust of their own nationality. And it was this self-distrust which produced what Miss Reichmann calls a "subjective Jewish question"—that is, an anti-Semitism that was a mere echo and reflection of unsolved problems inside the German group.

This "subjective Jewish question," by which the anti-Semites projected onto "the Jew" their own frustrated and ambivalent aggression, is sharply distinguished from the "objective Jewish problem," that group tension which springs rationally from economic, social, or ethnic conflicts between the older in-group and the small out-group. Miss Reichmann points out, on the whole rightly, that in the period before Hitler came to power this "objective Jewish question" was clearly in the process of disappearance in Germany. It may be said, perhaps, that Miss Reichmann concentrates somewhat too exclusively on the German Jews without paying sufficient attention to new immigrants; immigration in modern Germany was virtually synonymous with Jewish immigration from the East, and this did at times create an "objective" group tension. But except for the period immediately following the First World War, these "objective" problems were also diminishing; in the last years of the Weimar Republic they were actually very minor.

The distinction between the "objective" and the "subjective" is of the greatest significance for the problem of "assimilation." The Jews of Germany were more Jewish than, say, the Jews of France or Italy; on the other hand, they were more fully integrated into the culture of their country than the Jews of Poland, and they had lived longer in their country than most Jews of the United States and Great Britain. They tried harmoniously to combine their existence as Jews with their existence as Germans. The coming of Hitler proved, according to some, that such an attempt at solution of the "Jewish problem" is only self-deceit, leading directly to disaster.

Miss Reichmann demonstrates that such a conclusion cannot legitimately be drawn. The Jewish tragedy in Germany came to pass not because an "objective" social problem made the continued symbiosis of Germans and Jews unbearable to the Germans, but because a crisis of German history—involving many different po-

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litical, social, economic, and spiritual elements—led to a totalitarian revolution of which the German Jews were the first victims, and this independently of their way of life as Jews and Germans. From 1920 to 1933, the strength of the Nazis rose and fell in direct proportion to the degree of economic crisis; those who turned to Hitler saw him not primarily as the enemy of the Jews, but simply as the man who would "change everything."

Of course I do not mean to minimize the reality of German anti-Semitism. Hitler found in "the Jew" the ideal scapegoat for the German sense of frustration. But it is important to understand that for the Germans themselves the image of "the Jew" had little to do with the real Jews. "The Jew" was the source of all evil—but that had no connection with whatever real Jew happened to live next door. The records of the Nazi years contain an unending series of official complaints about the "apathy" of the masses, who refused to respond actively to anti-Semitic propaganda. What the Nazis did attain—and what was in the end just as harmful to Germany's moral health—was that most Germans became increasingly tolerant of their government's committing crimes of which they did not approve. They thus became passive accessories to the rule of terror and inevitably lost all faith in active social morality.

"The Goddess with whom we have to battle," wrote Arnold Toynbee in a discussion of predestination in history, "is not Saeva Necessitas with her lethal armory, but only Probability. . . ." From Miss Reichmann's well-documented, thoughtful, and conscientious study emerges the conclusion that the Goddess with whom the surviving Jews have to battle in order to prevent a recurrence of the tragedy in other countries, is mere Possibility rather than Probability. The catastrophe could not have happened if German democracy had not been weak from its beginnings; this indicates our most powerful defense against the Possibility.

The Trade Union as Community

A PHILOSOPHY OF LABOR. By FRANK TANNENBAUM. Knopf. 199 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by WILL HERBERG

WE are fast becoming a "laboristic society," Sumner Slichter tells us; he may exaggerate, but it is certainly true that trade unionism is one of the most important features of contemporary American life and is likely to become more so in the foreseeable future. A "philosophy of labor," really getting to the heart of the labor movement as a social institution, would be of very considerable value in illumining the structure and functioning of modern democratic society. Such a philosophy Frank Tannenbaum attempts to establish in this brief but important work. He does not quite succeed, but he does develop some significant insights.

Professor Tannenbaum—who teaches history at Columbia and has concerned himself with labor for some three decades—finds unionism to be essentially a spontaneous effort on the part of the worker to reestablish a community for himself amidst the disorganization of our "asocial society." (The last phrase is Alex Comfort's but it well fits Tannenbaum's diagnosis.) The Industrial Revolution disrupted all of the age-old continuities of life because it destroyed the community of work on which all other social coherences are based. The first three chapters of the book are devoted to a vivid retelling of this not unfamiliar tale. The fourth deals with the reflection of this disintegrative process in thought, i.e., with the philosophy of individualism. The fifth chapter is significantly headed "The Recre-

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ation of Community," and the rest of the book is given over to working out this theme.

Community, for the new class of industrial workers, was recreated through the factory. "The factory converted them into a 'society,' with a sense of cohesive interdependence." Out of the factory emerged the union. "The union is the spontaneous grouping of individual workers thrown together functionally. It reflects the moral identity and psychological unity men always discover when working together. . . ." Through his union, the worker "regains his dignity as a man and once again plays the part of a moral person." Trade unionism, in short, restores his "society" and his status in society.

But in restoring to the worker his status in society, unionism is also, according to Mr. Tannenbaum, remaking society itself, restoring the pre-modern pattern though in a different context. "Without intent or plan, the trade union movement is integrating the workers into what in effect amounts to a series of separate social orders. It is recreating a society based upon status and destroying the one we have known in our time—a society based upon contract." Tannenbaum indeed attributes almost unlimited creative potentialities to the labor movement. It can bring about the reunion of labor and industry by developing an expanding proprietary interest through using its "immense" financial resources to "buy into" the corporation. Indeed, unionism "may yet save the corporation . . . by incorporating it into its own natural 'society.'" Unionism alone offers a real alternative to statism, whether in its Soviet-totalitarian or British-"democratic" form. (To Mr. Tannenbaum, there is little ultimate distinction between the two.) All this unionism has done, is doing, or will do without so much as taking thought, by the very spontaneity of its social dynamic, by its institutional logic rather than by deliberate planning.

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Unionism not only comprehends all society in its scope; it also lays claim to the entire existence of the worker. "A society," Mr. Tannenbaum holds, "tends to become all-embracing and a way of life." As a "society," unionism "conceives its members to be the entire community," and therefore sees its own "moral role" as including the "economic, political, social and other interests of man"; in fact, "the trade union represents all the life-interests of its members." As the "only true society" to which modern industrialism has given rise, it necessarily possesses total jurisdiction over the life of the worker.

THERE is much that is true in this book, and yet it all adds up to a grave misunderstanding of the labor movement in modern democratic society. It is true that the labor movement first arose, in part at least, to make up for the disintegration of community induced by early industrialism. It is true that through his union the worker today enjoys a corporate status in society, and perhaps even a sense of vocation, that he could never possess by virtue of his individual position. But it is surely farfetched to assert, as Mr. Tannenbaum does, that the trade union, in contemporary America, is the worker's "society," the single social group in which and through which he is able to "play the part of a moral person." Is the American workingman of our time an alien to his local and national communities, does he possess no status in society except that which his union confers upon him? Quite obviously, the American worker achieves his status in society in a variety of social contexts, of which his union is but one. He comes to possess "social personality" not simply by virtue of his being a union member but also by virtue of his being a husband and father, a legionnaire, a Democrat, a Methodist, and fundamentally no doubt, in our society, by virtue of his being an American. To overlook this, as Mr. Tannenbaum tends to do, is seriously to misunderstand American life.

In reading this book, one sometimes gets the impression that Mr. Tannenbaum sees contemporary American reality in terms of his picture of early capitalism in Europe; his account of the impact of the Industrial Revolution is cast almost entirely in English terms or in terms of a transitory phase of immigrant life in this country. He thus misses not only much that is specific in our American experience but also a good deal of what is significant in the internal development of Western democratic society in the

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past hundred years. The touch of sentimentality that infects his writing—e.g., the early unionists were "simple men" who "wrote their own rules in the homely language of simple folk"—helps to aggravate this sense of unreality.

Even more serious is the fact that Mr. Tannenbaum tends to overlook what I should take to be the very basic fact about trade unionism: its emergence and functioning as a power institution limiting the arbitrary power of management and establishing a constitutional as opposed to a despotic regime in industry. From this viewpoint, trade unionism is seen to represent not simply a reaction against the liberal "idea," as Mr. Tannenbaum stresses, but also and at the same time a continuation and extension of it to the field of industrial relations. This ambivalence is something that cannot be ignored if the full social implications of unionism are to be grasped.

Mr. Tannenbaum exaggerates fantastically the potentialities of organized labor's financial resources. By tallying up the annual sum of dues payments, he gets what he feels to be an impressive total; he then points to this fund as the means by which labor can systematically buy out industry. But a little consideration is enough to destroy these illusions, which curiously recall the "labor banking" dreams of the 1920's. All of the general and special funds of all unions in the nation put together—aside from insurance and pension reserves, which are earmarked and therefore not to be touched—do not amount to half the 1950 profit of the General Motors Corporation alone. Unions, moreover, can hardly use their income for industrial investment. But even if they could, how would that lead to the "reestablishment of a proprietary interest by the *workers* in the industries from which they draw their living" (my italics)? A union is an organization, an institution, and as such is *not* identical with its members.

It is this total identification of the union with its members that seems to me to constitute the most perilous aspect of Mr. Tannenbaum's "philosophy." Were the labor movement indeed to claim, as Mr. Tannenbaum claims for it, total jurisdiction over "all the life-interests of its members," this claim would obviously constitute a totalitarian pretension as incompatible with a democratic labor movement as with democracy itself. "I am all for the 'trade union society,'" writes J. B. S. Hardman (*Labor and the Nation*, Winter 1951). "In fact, the 'trade union society' has been a good deal for me, and I consider reciprocity as fair play. *But I would not grant it exclusive control of life. . .*" (my emphasis). It is because Mr. Tannenbaum cannot understand this kind of devoted, yet limited, loyalty, that, despite all his insights, he ultimately fails to understand the place or the future of trade unionism in democratic society.

When My Baby Frowns at Me

A Child's Guide to a Parent's Mind. By Sally Liberman. Illustrations by Kiriki. With a postscript by Lawrence and Mary K. Frank. Henry Schuman. 145 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by Nathan Glazer

This book grew out of questions asked by young persons of seventeen to twenty-five as to why their parents were so impossible, and was written by a young woman who was graduated from college in 1950. Both questioners and authors are referred to as "children"—whether coyly or not, it is hard to tell.

We find a small amount of text on each left-hand page, illustrated by a line drawing, usually of symbolic character, on the facing right-hand page. Each page of text, written in the simplest possible language and apparently for children of elementary-school age (for example, the word "contradiction" is defined), describes some particular failing of parents and almost invariably explains that this failing is the expression of some motive that the parent hardly dares to admit to himself, or is not aware of at all, and which, indeed, is generally base.

These "children," for example, want to know why their parents annoy them with questions as to where they have gone and what they have done; why their parents want them to read books, practice the piano, and "have the things they missed." Now, some old-fashioned person might think that parents—at least some parents—perhaps annoy the children with their questions because they are interested in their children's activities and wish to suggest more rewarding ones; or that they are sometimes bothered by their children because the children are being nasty; or that the parents want them to read books or practice the piano because, as older persons, they know that the enjoyment of civilized cultural achievements requires some initial investment of effort; or that they criticize the accomplishments of their children because these are sometimes childish.

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But all such obvious explanations, we are told, will not do. Apparently, no explanation of behavior will do unless it finds more devious motives on the part of the parents:

"Parents who wish their children to be talented want their children to be talented in order to compensate for the lacks they have discovered too late."

"Some parents don't give credit when credit is due because they don't want to see the credit is true."

"Many times parents feel a child is a BOTHER because *IT* is unbothered, and *THEY* would like to be unbothered."

"Many parents feel left out when their child is interested in some thing out of their realm of experience so they strive to interest their child in *their* realm of experience."

And so on.

Now, if these child-writers took a jaundiced view of human motives generally, one could not complain. But they take a jaundiced view of only *parents'* motives; the author and her assistant children are never aware of the possible operation of similar motives in themselves when they ask such questions as: "Why do parents want to keep their troubles to themselves without ever confiding in their children?" or "Why are parents afraid to talk about marital difficulties they may have had or points of disagreement between husband and wife?"

Why, Junior, perhaps for the same reasons *you* want to keep your troubles to yourself! But oh no, Junior will never let his parents get away with that one. In *their* case, it's because they want to appear perfect, to bolster up their own insecure ego, etc., etc. It's quite enough to give any parent the willies, and since they're in such bad shape already, our psychologically advanced children should have considered whether the publication of this information might not make a bad situation worse.

THERE was a time when books addressed to children did not focus on the inadequacies of parents, but on the inadequacies of children. Children were taught to be neat, clean, polite, respectful, to suppress their as yet imperfectly disciplined animal instincts and grow up to be perfect ladies and gentlemen. Admittedly, under this regime parents often got away with murder, but it is time to ask whether the radical swing of the pendulum has not gone too far. A book like this—there are many others—takes it for granted that man is originally an angel and only culture is vile. Children are born perfect, but are corrupted by a culture full of contradictions, acting to mold them through the wicked instrumentality of parents. So by the time they have become parents these innocents are no longer perfect and now corrupt the perfect beings they themselves breed. This book is intended to break this vicious circle. Since children by definition have no faults, it naturally concerns itself with the faults of parents, warns children that if they are not careful the contradictions of culture will get them as it got their parents (these contradictions seem to include such things as the need to make a living), and hopes they will become parents without ever having the nasty characteristics of their own parents.

This contemporary form of Rousseauism seems resolutely to ignore most of the facts of life: that children have to be socialized, that they don't like the process, that the socialization of children is a bother to parents; that, further, parents generally love their children (in contradistinction to what their children generally feel for *them*), which means there will be some natural control over the forms of parental cruelty described in this book; that parents often wish to transmit a complex cultural heritage to their children and that this process, at least initially, is likely to be painful for both parties. A good part of all this unpleasantness, these new Rousseauists ought to realize, is necessary if we are not all to become the animals that children are when born.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

WILLIAM BARRETT, associate editor of *Partisan Review*, teaches philosophy at New York University, and is a well-known critic.

ALFRED JOSPE is program director of the Hillel Foundation.

NORBERT MUHLEN's most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "The Return of Goebbels' Film-Makers" in our March issue.

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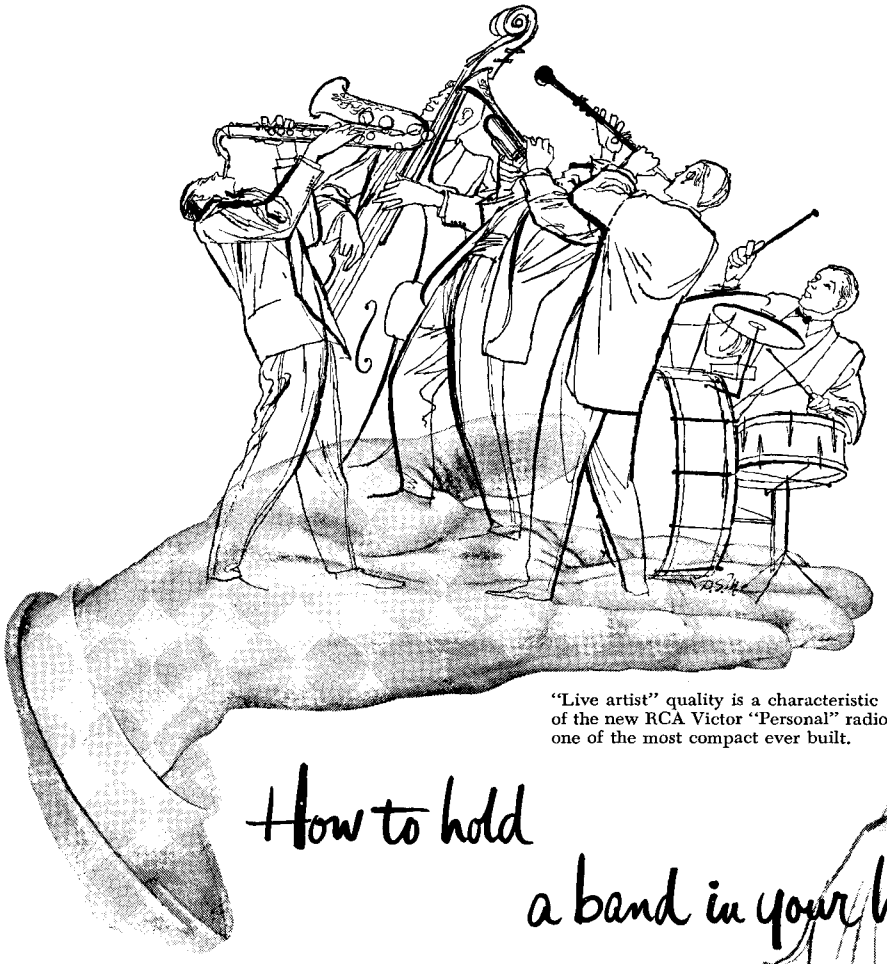

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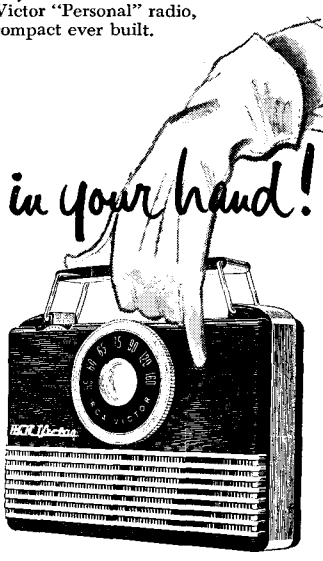

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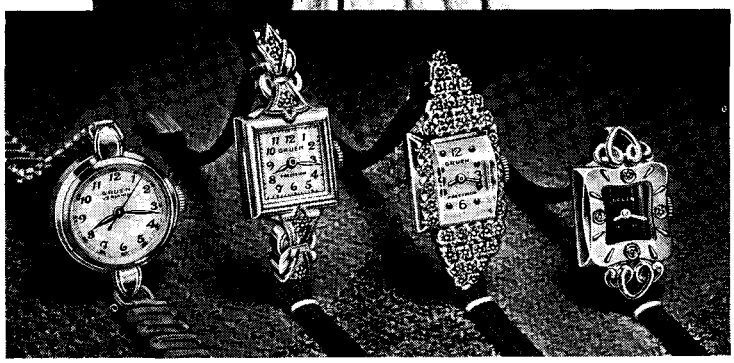

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